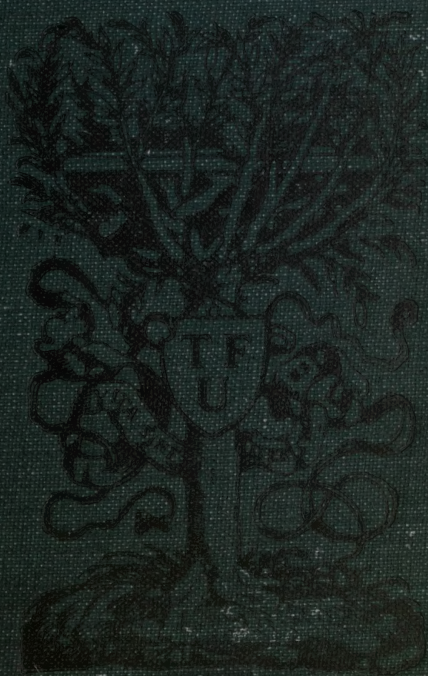


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IN THE  
LIFE OF A RADICAL  
AND  
EARLY DAYS  
WITH AN INTRODUCTION  
BY  
HENRY DUNCKLEY  
(OVERAX.)











*BAMFORD'S PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF  
A RADICAL*





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IN THE  
LIFE OF A RADICAL  
AND  
EARLY DAYS

*EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION,*

BY

HENRY DUNCKLEY

("VERAX")

London

T. FISHER UNWIN, LTD.

ADELPHI TERRACE

BAMFORD'S PASSAGE  
LIFE OF A RADICAL  
EARLY DAYS

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## NOTE.



IN revising Bamford's "Early Days " and " Passages in the Life of a Radical," with a view to the present publication, it has been judged desirable to omit some portions which were but of trivial or passing interest, and occasionally to compress the narrative by leaving out formal documents and lists of names, and throwing together a number of short chapters dealing with the same group of facts. A few personal animadversions, which after the lapse of fifty years it was hardly worth while to repeat, are also omitted. But beyond the correction of obvious errors no other change has been made, nor hardly a sentence altered. The works are reproduced exactly as Bamford wrote them. One other point may be mentioned. The " Passages," &c., was published some years before the " Early Days," but in reprinting both as parts of the same publication, it seemed proper to reverse the order. The two together form a continuous piece of autobiography.





## INTRODUCTION.



On the last day of March three-quarters of a century ago a coach drew up at Bow Street conveying a batch of political prisoners from Lancashire. There were eight of them, and one of the number was a young man named Samuel Bamford, a native of Middleton and a weaver by trade, whom we wish to introduce to those of our readers who may not yet have heard of him. It was a time of much excitement throughout the country. The close of the war had not brought with it the blessings which had been expected. There was a sudden stop to Government expenditure on a great scale. The world was impoverished by a twenty years' struggle, and had little left for trade. Our manufacturers were substituting machinery for manual labour, and this meant for the moment the throwing of a large number of "hands" out of employ. There was great distress in the manufacturing districts of the north, and much discontent. The people threw the blame upon the Government; they had no voice in Parliament, and they were persuaded that if they had there would soon be an end to their misery. At any rate a House of Commons which fairly represented the nation would never have passed the infamous Corn Law for keeping up agricultural rents by making bread dear. With or without reason the workpeople in the north looked upon their hardships as wrongs for which the men in power were responsible. They petitioned Parliament, and finding that their petitions were not listened to they began to conspire. Secret meetings were held in almost every town and village. Wild schemes were broached; though ministers

turned a deaf ear to the cries of famishing multitudes, they were not beyond the reach of vengeance. A few desperate men might easily make London or Manchester "a second Moscow." It was believed that Government spies were abroad, and that in the furtherance of their trade, in order to have something to disclose, the most violent suggestions came from them. It is certain that the Government were greatly alarmed. Detective measures were set in motion, and the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended to give them free play.

The party who arrived at Bow Street were supposed to have been engaged in these secret meetings, and they had been arrested on suspicion of high treason. They had been travelling since five o'clock of the morning of the day before; they were poorly clad; they were chained to each other, and in this plight most of them, and Bamford for one, made their first acquaintance with London. But they were brimful of Lancashire humour. At an hostelry opposite Bow Street, where they were lodged for the night, they had a heartier meal than had fallen to their share for many a day, and after supper they amused the "King's messengers" and the Bow Street officers in whose charge they were with songs and recitations. The next day they were taken before the Privy Council, where Lord Sidmouth presided, with Lord Castlereagh by his side. After a few questions asked of them separately they were sent by way of detention to Coldbath Fields prison. They were brought up several times before the Privy Council, and at the end of a month their fate was decided. Some of Bamford's companions were more or less implicated in proceedings which might be held to convey a suspicion of treasonable designs. These were sent to distant gaols till the Privy Council might choose to release them. Bamford had not gone so far. He shared their political ideas, but he shrank from acts of violence. He was of an ardent temperament, he could not long brook the monotony of ordinary life, and was always ready for an adventure of any sort. But he was good-natured, kind-hearted, and open as the day. There was nothing of the stuff of a conspirator in him. He was also shrewd enough to see through the itinerant agitators who were taking advantage of

the general discontent and endeavouring to instigate the working classes to desperate measures. He had early taken alarm at what he heard; he had warned others against having anything to do with secret meetings, and had kept aloof from them himself. The Privy Council had no doubt plenty of evidence good and bad in their hands, but none of it told against Bamford. His personal appearance, his manner and style of address, appear to have made a favourable impression upon the Council. Naturally frank and fearless, he was not the man to be cowed by the sight of the "green cloth" and of the great people round it. He was rather fond of figuring as a "freeborn Englishman," and of magnifying the prerogatives which belonged to him in that capacity. He questioned their lordships about his right to petition Parliament, and among other favours asked to be allowed the use of pen, ink, and paper, that he might keep a diary. Would they let him have books and a supply of clean linen? Delighting in his native Doric, he could speak fluently in language which had in it something of a literary flavour. Lord Castlereagh eyed him curiously. Lord Sidmouth treated him with perfect courtesy and bestowed some compliments. At his last appearance before the Council Lord Sidmouth said he had great pleasure in restoring him to his family, and, trusting that he would not be seen there again, assured him that he wished him well.

Bamford did not appear again before the Privy Council, but two years later he was involved, most undeservedly, in more serious trouble. It was in connection with the famous meeting of Reformers held at St. Peter's Field, Manchester, on the 16th of August, 1819, generally known as "Peterloo." The measures taken by the Government had not put a stop to agitation, but the proceedings were of a more open and public character. Sir Charles Wolseley, Major Cartwright, and Mr. Hunt, were at the head of the movement, and great care was taken to keep it within lawful bounds. Perhaps one of the plans adopted was open to misapprehension. The people were exhorted to drill, not, it was said, with any view to an armed outbreak, but merely that they might appear at public meetings in better order. Drilling went on at Middleton, as at



other places, and Bamford was one of the leaders. At night-fall, or in the early mornings, they would betake themselves to the moors, form themselves into companies, march, and face about at the word of command. The day appointed for the Manchester meeting was coming on, a great procession was to set out from Middleton, and all were anxious that they should acquit themselves with credit. When the day came Bamford headed the procession. They carried banners, but no weapons, not even walking sticks. Many of the men had their wives and sweethearts with them. It was a great holiday "turn out," the prevailing merriment being a little subdued by a sense of patriotic aims, and it was moreover a grand thing to march and pause at the sound of the bugle. The magistrates were in a state of alarm. They had communicated with the Government and received instructions. Special constables were sworn in, the Manchester and Cheshire Yeomanry were stationed near the spot where the meeting was to be held, and a company of the 15th Hussars was within call. Everybody knows how the meeting was broken up, and at what cost of violence and bloodshed. A few days after the meeting Bamford, along with Hunt and others, was apprehended. The charge was again one of high treason, and Nadin, an historical personage in the Manchester police, whispered to him that he would certainly be hanged this time. The accused were committed to Lancaster Castle, but the trial was appointed to take place at York, the charge being reduced from high treason to one of seditious assembly. Bamford and three others were found guilty. Sir John Bayley summed up strongly in Bamford's favour, but prejudice carried the day. They were liberated on their recognisances to appear at the Court of King's Bench in the ensuing Easter term to receive judgment, which in Bamford's case was that he should be imprisoned in Lincoln Castle for twelve months, and afterwards give securities for good behaviour.

His year's imprisonment was a turn in Bamford's life. He took it with his usual good humour. He held the verdict to be infamous, but he had done that which a jury found to be a crime, and he had a sort of proud willingness to pay the



forfeit. His maxim as a prisoner was to submit himself cheerfully to discipline and pay implicit obedience to orders. He soon became a general favourite. The governor treated him with the utmost kindness. He and an old comrade shared the same room, his political friends supplied him with a moderate allowance of cash, and he was permitted to provide for himself. His only hardship was detention, and this had many alleviations. The visiting justices took an especial interest in his case, and from the conversations they had with him they seem to have come to the conclusion that he was in many ways deserving of respect. It came to be understood that Lincoln Castle had not often opened its gates to a better or more intelligent man. He took with him the reputation of being a poet, and his claim was acknowledged. He could sing his own songs and tell capital stories. Indulgence in his favour was carried to unusual limits. He wished to see his wife, and she was allowed to visit and stay with him, a room being fitted up for them. She stayed with him several months, going in and out as she pleased, and doing her marketing as at home. No wonder that on the day of his discharge he thanked the magistrates for the kindness which had been shown to him. Mr. Scarlett, afterwards Lord Abinger, who had conducted the prosecution, singled him out for special attention. The "King's messengers" who took charge of him on his way to London to appear before the Privy Council, surprised him by their civility. He found that people in the upper ranks and those they employed, whom he had been accustomed to denounce as tyrants and oppressors, were not so bad as he had imagined. The discovery told upon him, and had some permanent results. It modified to a considerable extent the colouring if not the texture of his opinions.

Perhaps the truth is that as a politician Bamford is not to be taken too seriously. His politics were a part of his temperament, and varied with its changing moods. His character was essentially romantic, and he leaned to the sentimental side of everything. The result was a sort of every-day idealism, a dream of something brighter and in

every way more desirable than the present moment happened to have brought with it. In his youth he had been left pretty much to himself. There had been an actual lack of discipline, though it is very likely that if the yoke had been forced upon him by parental or other authority, he would have shaken it off. He had fair opportunities for making his way in the world. He had plenty of ability, everybody liked him, and patient application would have enabled him to reach what is usually understood by "a good position." It was certainly his own choice, or the result of a series of voluntary failures, that he took to silk-weaving as a permanent occupation. Who shall say that his choice is to be regretted? Who shall say that he was not on the whole happier and better than if he had kept to the beaten track which leads to success and made a fortune? At any rate, we should have been the poorer. Hundreds of Lancashire men, then and since, starting where he did, and with talents smaller than his, have attained to great wealth, and have passed away without leaving a vestige of anything to remind the next generation that they had lived at all. Bamford escaped a common-place career. He followed the bent of his inclinations. He lived his own life, proud as an aristocrat and gay as a bird. It was not given him to attain to a high place in literature. The wonder is that he found a place in it at all. But he was not without culture. He had read some of the best books, he was fond of poetry, and believed himself to be a poet. In this persuasion he no doubt flattered himself too highly, but he had a gift of versification which was a source of constant delight. In prose he succeeded better. The narrative he has left us of his "Early Days," and his "Passages in the Life of a Radical," need no apology. If allowance be made for some technical defects due to an irregular education, they may be said to reach a high level in point of style. He knows how to use his mother tongue. His diction is copious and unfettered, and not wholly of the homely cast, which might have been expected from the pen of a hand-loom weaver. There is enough of homeliness to give an agreeable flavour, but the more cultivated forms of expression come naturally to him. He is at home in telling a

good story, and overflows with humour in describing a grotesque situation, or in painting the foibles of his friends, while his love of nature supplies his imagination with illustrations which err only on being at times perhaps too exuberant. All may read him with pleasure. They will find in his pages such pictures of Lancashire life and manners, of from fifty to a hundred years ago, as are hardly to be met with elsewhere.

In the work by which he is best known, Bamford describes himself as "a Radical," and the designation is no doubt correct, especially when used retrospectively. But his political attitude underwent a change after his release from Lincoln Castle. He was not on the best of terms with his old friends, and the fault was probably not wholly theirs. Often modest and even humble in his professions, he nevertheless thought a good deal of himself, and any failure to recognise his claims was noted down and resented. The habit of self-assertion must have made him an inconvenient colleague. He was sensitive and suspicious, apt to take offence where none was intended. He was quick to imagine himself the victim of some intrigue engaged in for the purpose of lowering his credit or impeaching his integrity. By way of reprisal he turned his back upon the offenders, would have no more to do with them, and played the part of a Radical in retreat. In referring to his past experiences, he spoke as one who had been for a time deluded, but whose eyes had been opened and was thenceforth half-repentant. To some extent this was due to his closer acquaintance with Mr. Hunt, the principal figure at the Peterloo meeting, who had been arrested and tried along with him. He had looked up to Hunt as a leader. He was awed by his oratory, and taking him on his own terms, believed him to be a patriot of the loftiest type. On coming to know him better this flattering estimate gave way to disapproval and contempt. Rightly or wrongly, he came to the conclusion that Hunt was a vain-glorious, self-seeking demagogue, willing to sell his soul for the cheers of the mob. He resented the deception, and resolved to take good care never to be deceived again. In pursuance of this resolution he extended the inference drawn from the single example of Hunt to all who took



a prominent part in agitating for political reforms. He had done with agitators for ever. He fancied that he understood their craft, and he was not going to be victimised a second time. Looking back upon his own exploits, he regarded them in the light of escapades, the outcome of untaught and undisciplined sentiment, and such perhaps they were, though influenced by a good deal of honest feeling. In his own opinion he had grown wiser, and he made it thenceforth a part of his duty to warn others against the false lights which had led him astray.

There was another feature of Bamford's character which helped towards this result. He had an amiable desire to be thought well of by others. He was a good deal less than indifferent to approbation, and he valued it according to the social heights from which it descended. When it was known that he had separated himself from those who were supposed to aim at accomplishing political changes by violent methods, and that he viewed his own past conduct with some degree of reprehension, he became an object of interest to local men of the wealthier class. They praised him for what they naturally described as his moderation and good sense. In turbulent times they pointed him out as a laudable example. If their own workmen, striking perhaps for higher wages and even threatening to break their machines, would only follow the advice of Bamford, everything, it was suggested, would go well. The workpeople did not care to be confronted with such an example, and they gradually came to look upon Bamford as a renegade from the class to which he once belonged. The severance became wider when it was known that he no longer depended for a living upon the work of the loom. His prominence as a politician and his literary talents had been the means of procuring employment on the press. He was the correspondent of a London newspaper, and he acted as occasional reporter for papers in the neighbourhood. He removed to a better house. He could make verses, moreover, and a corner was sometimes found for them in the newspapers. To counsel men not to break machines might well be regarded as easy talk for one who had ceased to weave at all, and to

whom, therefore, the question of machinery was a matter of indifference. The outcry against him served only to confirm his isolation, and though he was always the zealous advocate of what he took to be the real interests of the working classes he liked quite as well to play the part of their critic and candid friend. He had no sympathy with the Chartist agitation. The objects aimed at by the Chartists were the same as those for which he had gone to prison ; but he denounced them and their leaders with a hearty virulence which would have won the praise of any Tory. When special constables were called out to put down disturbances, he took up the truncheon. If there are any of the Conservative school who may fancy that their time would be thrown away in reading " *Passages in the Life of a Radical*," they need not be deterred by any such consideration. They will find a good deal in him that is in entire harmony with their own views. The spirit of much that he has written, detached from particular expressions of opinion, can hardly fail to command their sympathy. All this did not disqualify him for the place he held in the ranks of local Liberalism—then rather Whig than Radical—and there can be no doubt that he was sincere and honest throughout.

Bamford took naturally to the press. He was communicative, and, having something to say, he did not rest till he had said it. He published in pamphlet form an account of his first arrest and of the subsequent proceedings connected with it. This was soon followed by a small volume of verses, entitled "*The Weaver Boy, or Miscellaneous Poetry*." His poetical reputation went with him to York and London on his second arrest. Mr. Scarlett, the prosecuting counsel, had heard of the "*Weaver Boy*," and asked Bamford to send him a copy. We have said that he was known as "*a poet*" at Lincoln Castle. That circumstance probably influenced the magistrates in his favour, and procured him more indulgent treatment than he would otherwise have received. The Peterloo meeting was a great event in his personal history. For his share in it he had been, as he believed, unjustly condemned and imprisoned. It was also an event of national importance. It had attracted the attention of the whole



country, and had led to animated debates in Parliament. Bamford could not help feeling that the whole affair was the result of a deplorable misunderstanding. The "upper classes" were unacquainted with the condition and wants of the poor; they were badly informed as to the character of their political aspirations; and perhaps the poor were to some extent prejudiced in the view they took of the attitude of the "upper classes" towards them. Bamford was also impressed with what seemed to him a certain hollowness of the agitation on the popular side. He had been brought into close acquaintance with the leaders, and was on the whole disgusted. Here, then, was something to be told. The epic almost demanded a narrator. It seemed to him a duty to give to his countrymen the benefit of his experiences. His first attempt was a failure. He wrote an introduction and sent it to Mr. Tait, of "*Tait's Magazine*," together with an outline of the proposed work, and offered to supply "copy" monthly. Mr. Tait declined the offer, but gave him advice. He urged him to go on with the work, and when he had finished to submit it to some intelligent and sensible friend—naming Ebenezer Elliott—with full permission to cut out all its redundancies. Mr. Tait's judgment was no doubt correct, but it was based upon an unfortunate specimen. The introduction, which Bamford loved too well to give up, was the worst part of the work as it afterwards appeared, and if the whole had been written in the same high-flown style it would have been unreadable. Bamford did not relish the experienced publisher's advice, and abandoned the project for a time.

It was resumed in 1839. The Chartist agitation was then in full swing. The scheme of a "Sacred Month" was proposed, during which all work should be abandoned. A friend had furnished him with a prose translation of Berenger's "*La Lyonnaise*." This he had thrown into verse, and he now published it as a pamphlet, together with a stirring and eloquent address. It is said to have had some considerable influence in dissuading the working men of the neighbourhood from taking part in the questionable proceedings then contemplated. His former project was now revived. He saw the

bookseller's windows filled with numbers of "Pickwick," "Nicholas Nickleby," and "Jack Sheppard." Surely he could do something better than "the trashy, unreal novels which the press deigned to extol." But he could not find a publisher. One to whom he applied would not take the work even with a present of the copyright. It was clear that if it was to be done at all he must assume the sole responsibility. Accordingly he engaged a printer, got five hundred copies of the introduction and the first chapter printed off, and paid for them. His wife stitched them into covers, and then his business was to sell them. By the time the ninth and tenth sheets were published he had twelve hundred subscribers, and the earlier sheets had to be reprinted. The work was a success and the profit it yielded was highly acceptable. It was noticed in the "Athenæum" and the "Quarterly." His friend Ebenezer Elliott sent him warm congratulations. Mr. Scarlett, then Lord Abinger, took copies, and mentioned the work to Lord Campbell, Lord Brougham, the Duke of Buccleuch, and others who showed a warm interest in promoting its circulation. "The head of the great Tory Lowthers," the Earl of Lonsdale, wrote to assure him that he had "read his works with great satisfaction." Bamford speaks rather bitterly of the very different treatment he received from "some Liberals." With the general result he had every reason to be satisfied. He was now a public character. He was appealed to as an authority on working-class politics. His writings were made to furnish lessons of reproof as well as instruction for those who were being led astray by "the wiles of the agitator." The position was in some respects unfortunate, but he had no great difficulty in maintaining the character thus pressed upon him.

In 1848 Bamford published his "Early Days," giving us his own history down to the time of his first arrest, and recollections embracing the whole life of the district as far back as his memory carried him. This is a delightful production, abounding in idyllic pictures and romantic adventures, and in passages of genuine pathos. He had something in the way of ancestry to boast of. His family had long been rooted in the soil, and

but for an ancestor's Puritan scruples, he might have been a country squire instead of a hand-loom weaver. A fine opportunity was thrown away when his father took him from the Manchester Grammar School. If he had been permitted to reap the full advantages afforded by that institution, even as it was then, his natural talents would have found their proper scope, though in that case the Peterloo meeting would have missed one of its heroes, and we should not have had the "Passages in the Life of a Radical." Bamford's autobiography has the stamp of truthfulness. He lays his heart open and tells us everything. His youth was wild and stormy, and it must be said that he was anything but exemplary in point of morals. He had to run away from the parish constables to escape the pecuniary consequences of one of his indiscretions. A little girl whom he had loved as a boy, after some temporary transfer of affection on his part, became his wife. But the nuptial knot was tied too late for his reputation. Their only child, then "just beginning to take notice," was placed in his arms with some ceremony at the wedding festival, and he speaks of her constantly as his "love child." But having said this we have said the worst, and never was a wrong more amply atoned for. He was the most faithful of husbands, the most loving of fathers. The three were bound together by the tenderest ties. His wife shared his trials with uncomplaining devotion, and he lavished upon his "Mima" the treasures of a homely but passionate poetry. A more beautiful picture can hardly be imagined than that presented by their domestic life. His narrative is full of interest in other respects. He gives us a graphic portraiture of a state of manners which has passed away. We see modern Lancashire in its first making, before the period of big factories set in, when the weaver fetched his materials from Manchester, wrought them up in his own cottage, and took them back again when the task was finished. Five minutes would take the weaver from his loom into paths that led soon into the loveliest solitudes. He was thus enabled to live in close companionship with nature. Usages which had come down unchanged for centuries were still in full vigour, and life, though laborious, and in hard times



pinched with poverty, was nevertheless full of joy. The traditions of a distant time had floated down unbroken. There were stories to be told of Flodden, and the events of '45, when the local Jacobites were blessing the Pretender, seemed a thing of yesterday. All this Bamford gives us in his raciest style and with never-failing humour. The historian who wishes to present us with certain aspects of English life at the beginning of the century can hardly afford to miss his pages.

From some remarks which occur in one of the chapters subsequently added as supplementary to his "Passages in the Life of a Radical," it would seem that a time came when Bamford thought himself entitled to some recognition from the Government. It appears that Mr. (afterwards Sir Benjamin) Hawes said in the House of Commons how desirable it was that "rewards and encouragements" should be bestowed upon those of the working classes "who distinguished themselves by attention to reading and the cultivation of their minds," and that Sir Robert Peel, in expressing his approval of the suggestion, "pointed out a mode by which such individuals might be rewarded without bringing an additional burden upon the country." Bamford's comment is this: "If studious readers, then, and self-cultivators among the working classes are to be distinguished and rewarded, what shall be done to those of the same grade who not only have read a deal and thought a deal, but have also written good books for others to read? Aye, books that mayhap have not only been read by working men with advantage, but also with profit as well as pleasure by some whose robes have brushed the throne, if not by the fair one who sits upon the throne herself; what shall be the reward of these men?" He says a page or two later that he had been led into these remarks by a strong desire to do justice to others rather than to benefit himself. He was "tainted with the irredeemable sin of political leadership," and was "prepared for the consequences." "An independent but unassuming spirit, and contentment with the humblest fare" had rendered him "almost impervious to vicissitude," and had made him the sort of man and his wife the sort of

woman "to smile at things and at the want of things which to many would be an affliction." Whatever may have been Bamford's intention, there can be no doubt as to the interpretation which his friends would put upon those professions, and there were some who were in a position to help him. In 1852 he had the offer of an appointment in Somerset House, and it was accepted. It was that of doorkeeper or messenger. He was then sixty-four years of age. The hours were easy and the duties light, but he did not keep it long. It is said that he pined for old scenery and old friends. This may be true, but it is also true that he thought the position beneath him. He was too proud for the place, and he soon gave it up, preferring a precarious livelihood in the midst of his old haunts to a certainty which seemed to him to be associated with some degree of degradation. It was also to some extent the outbreak of a constitutional foible. He had never from the days of his youth been able to endure the monotony of fixed and regular employment.

As time went on Bamford took a sort of historical position among the Liberals of Manchester. Minor incidents were forgotten. He was regarded as a relic of a past around which legends began to gather. His tall and erect form, his rugged and massive features, a flowing beard, and locks of grey hair that were left to fall upon his shoulders made him a conspicuous object everywhere. One could almost fancy him a Druid in modern garb. His friends delighted to do him honour. His portrait hangs in the Manchester Reform Club, along with those of Cobden, Bright, Gladstone, the Duke of Devonshire, and the Earl Grey of the first Reform Bill. At private gatherings he would often be present as the lion of the night, but he was gruff, and often growled at those who tried to stroke him. When his infirmities increased with advancing years a "syndicate" of admirers supplied him with a modest income sufficient for all his wants. He died on April 13, 1872, at the ripe age of 84. A flat stone in Middleton churchyard marks the spot where his remains lie interred, along with those of his wife and daughter. Beneath each of their names is an epitaph in verse of his own composing. Beneath his own is a brief



record of what he was and did. A short distance off, where the churchyard hill overhangs the town, a stone obelisk, bearing his effigy in bronze, has been erected to his memory ; but his works will prove a more enduring monument.



*EARLY DAYS.*



# EARLY DAYS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### BIRTH, PARENTAGE, AND OTHER MATTERS.

My parents were a worthy and honest couple, residing, when I was born, in the town of Middleton, near Manchester. My father was a weaver of muslin, at that time considered a fine course of work, and requiring a superior hand; whilst my mother found plenty of employment in occasional weaving, in winding bobbins or pins for my father, and in looking after the house and the children, of whom I was the fourth born, and the third then living. I have always been given to understand that I was brought into the world on the 28th day of February, in "the Gallic æra—eighty-eight," when, certainly, many of the world's troubles, as well as my own, had a beginning. My parents were religious, of which further will appear hereafter. My father, for his station in life, was a superior man. He had many talents, both natural and acquired, which in those days were not often possessed by men of his condition in society. He was considerably imbued with book knowledge, particularly of a religious kind; wrote a good hand; understood arithmetic; had some acquaintance with astronomy; was a vocal and instrumental musician, singing from the book and playing on the flute; he had a deep taste for melody, as I can recollect from the tunes he played; he was likewise an occasional composer of music, and introduced several of his pieces amongst the religious body with which he was connected; he was also a writer of verses of no mean order—so that, take him for all in all, he stood far above his rustic acquaintance in the



village, and had to endure the usual consequences—envy, and detraction from the meanest of them. During the hot blood of his youth few young men could stand before him, either in the wrestling bout or the battle. I have heard it told that, in those days, notwithstanding his taste for books, and music, and other means for true enjoyment, he at times associated with the wild rough fellows of the neighbourhood at the Church Alehouse, or at the Boar's Head Inn, and drank, danced, or, when nothing less would do, fought with the moodiest or merriest of them. He stood six feet in height, with a good breadth of chest, a powerful arm, a strong, well-formed leg, and a neat, compact foot that could either spring over a five-barred gate, or deal a bone-breaking kick to an adversary. Such, however, was not his wont; when he did fight it was almost certain to be either in self-defence, or in behalf of right which some bully would be trying to domineer over or coerce. At one of these battles, which were forced upon him, the contest took place in a room called "the thrashing-bay," at the Boar's Head, Middleton; it lasted two full hours, up and down fighting, and at the end of that time his adversary, a very powerful man from a neighbouring township, lay helpless on the floor, and had to be carried home by his companions. I mention these feats of my father's youth not in a spirit commendatory of their mere featship; with him, his physical power was never a matter of boast, but rather led him to a pacific guardedness of its use; whilst with me the dominance of mere muscle and bone never was, never will be, held in honour, except when exercised in the repression of other brute forces employed in the perpetration of wrong, or in the maltreatment of right. In such a case I would say, "Let physical power bend the full weight of its vigour to its work, and not give over too soon, not leave off when part done."

But irregularities like these of my father's young days, violent probably in proportion to their unfrequency, could not be indulged in without producing their natural consequences. His health was impaired; he took cold after cold, and disregarded them, and at length a violent fever laid him prostrate at the verge of the grave. On his recovery he was an altered

man. His own natural sense, supported by the serious advice of relatives and friends, determined him on endeavouring to lead a different life. Being convinced that the course he had pursued was fraught with evil as well as folly, he sought divine aid in abandoning it, and he joined a society of Methodists, of which his parents and several individuals of the family were already members.

When his health had become re-established, neither his good resolutions nor God's help forsook him. He continued a member of the religious society he had joined; became "a burning and a shining light," as the Methodists term an exemplary young member; and soon afterwards marrying my mother, he set forward, as we may say, on his pilgrimage through this world, and "Zionward." In due time a young family began to sprout about his heels, and, with a view to meet increasing expenditure, he and a brother of his named Thomas ventured a small capital of money in the spinning line, which was then done by jenny, and in weaving their yarns into grey cloth. They succeeded in proportion to their most sanguine expectations, for there was then a market for anything which the spindle or the hand-loom could make, and they were about to realise all they had dared to hope, when a member of their religious body, one of their "brethren in Israel," piqued, as they supposed, by their increasing influence in a religious as well as worldly sense, suddenly called on them for the repayment of a sum which he had lent them for the purpose of commencing their business, and persisting in his demand, they sold off their stock of cloth and machinery, paid every farthing they owed, and closed their concern, my father sitting down to the business of school-master, and my uncle resuming the manual operations of a weaver and small farmer. Difficulties still increased with the wants of our family; my father's school profits were not sufficiently steady to be depended upon, and he relinquished them and returned to the loom. The throes of the French Revolution and the excitement they created in England soon afterwards deranged both money transactions and mercantile affairs. Banks stopped, payments were suspended, and trade was at a stand. Woe to the poor weaver then, with his loom without

work, the provision shop without credit, and his wife and weans foodless, and looking at each other, and at him, as if saying—Husband! father! hast thou neither bread nor hope for us?

It was at about such a period as this that my earliest recollections of my parents and our family commence. My father, as I have said, was a huge-framed body of a man, but at that time he was pale, stooping, and attenuated, probably from scanty fare, as well as repeated visitations of sickness. My mother—and I have her image distinctly before me—was a person of very womanly and motherly presence. Tall, upright, active, and cleanly to an excess: her cheeks were fair and ruddy as apples; her dark hair was combed over a roll before and behind, and confined by a mob cap as white as bleached linen could be made; her neck was covered by a handkerchief, over which she wore a bed-gown, and a clean checked apron, with black hose and shoes, completed her every-day attire. Her name was Hannah—a name I shall always love for her sake; she was the youngest daughter of Jeffrey Battersby, a master boot and shoemaker, of whom more hereafter. She had two sisters married, one to a tradesman named Healey, residing at Rochdale, and the other to a woollen-draper living at Manchester; consequently they were both doing comparatively well in the world, whilst my poor mother's dark cloud was ascending and spreading over herself, her husband, and her five children. Small and fitful was the comfort she received from her kindred; but her sister Clemmy (Clementine), at Manchester, treated her with a coolness and indifference which cut my mother to the soul. I perhaps should not have mentioned names in connection with these circumstances had not the recollections of my mother's sufferings divested me of every wish for reserve. Oh! how immeasurably superior was my poor, but noble-hearted parent, to her proud, mean, sordid sister. I remember as it were but yesterday, after one of her visits to the dwelling of that "fine lady," she had divested herself of her wet bonnet, her soaked shoes, and changing her dripping outer garments, stood leaning with her elbow on the window sill, her hand up to her cheek, her eyes looking on vacancy, and the tears trickling over her fingers. She had



been all the weary way to Manchester and back—and it was a long weary road in those days; she had knocked at her “great” sister’s door, a servant had admitted her, and, more humane than her mistress, had ventured to ask her to a seat by the kitchen fire, where her proud sister saw her in passing, and scarcely deigned to notice her. The servants, however, in whom the impulses of common humanity had not been suppressed by pride, offered her refreshment; but her heart was too full, and back through the rain, and the wind, and the stormy weather, less inclement than her misnamed relative, did she return to her young and anxiously waiting family, to whose caresses and tender questionings her only reply was, for a while, unrestrained tears.

The recollection of my heart-wounded, but noble-minded and forgiving mother, as she suffered under that trial, is still vividly before me; and never, I believe, will it be obliterated from my memory so long as consciousness remains. Ever since I had the faculty for reasoning on these recollections I have cherished an unmitigable contempt for mere money pride, much of it though there be in the world, and as thorough a contempt have I ever felt for the unfeelingness which mammonish superiority too often produces. Samson said, “Out of the eater came forth meat”; and in application of the parable I may truly say that, out of the unnatural conduct of my mother’s sister, arose the very natural and self-sustaining disdain of that mother’s son towards all pretension not based on worth, towards all superiority not exalted by goodness. To rank, office, or to station arising from office, suitable concedence would I make; to the man filling that office or station such deference as were commensurate with his known worth would I tender; but to the poor human hull, irrespective of self-desert, would I not concede anything. Before the mere man-husk, however large his money-bag—nay, though he were “plated with gold,” not one hair of my head should be abased. Thus the germ of this feeling of repulsion (calculated for evil or for good, according to its right or wrong application) became interwoven with my existence, and part of my being, for all my after life.

## CHAPTER II.

### OF MY FOREFATHERS.

HAVING thus, as it were, identified myself and my parents, it may not be improper to give some account of my progenitors, especially as two of them were connected with the historical events of their country; and the religious tenacity of a third was said to have decided the fate of his descendants with respect to worldly condition.

It would be about a hundred and thirty-two years since, or the year 1716, that my father's grandfather, James Bamford, lived at Hools Wood, in Thornham, keeping there a small farm, and making cane reeds for weavers of flannel and coarse cotton. Of his children I know not anything, save that he had many sons from whom the Bamfords of Middleton, Alkington, Tonge, and some other neighbouring places are descended. According to what was handed down in our branch of his posterity, he was the next heir to the estate of Bamford Hall, where he used to visit and be on terms of intimacy with William Bamford, the last male of the old family, who resided at the hall. My ancestor was, it seems, fond of the chase, and on hunting and shooting days, he was frequently at the hall and dined with the other guests. At this time the property was said to be entailed; though for the truth of that I vouch not any more than I do for other traditionary matters which follow. My aunt, who was, I believe, a contemporary of some of the parties, narrated the story to me as I give it. This William Bamford had no offspring save two daughters, and as they could not inherit the property, when he lay on his death-bed, he sent for my



ancestor, and by much entreaty, and many solemn promises, backed perhaps by a *douceur*, he induced my ancestor to forego his claim in favour of the young ladies, on condition that at their decease the property should revert to the next heir in his family. The entail was accordingly cut off; Bamford, of Bamford, made his will and died; and his daughter, "Madam Ann," as she was titled, held the property. The other sister married, and went to reside in Yorkshire; but Madam Ann lived and died a spinster at Bamford Hall. And thus, according to traditionary accounts, were the rightful heirs cut off from the property, which had descended through their ancestors from the time when the Saxon wrested it from the Celt.

My grandfather was Daniel Bamford, the youngest son of James Bamford. He came to reside at Middleton, and was a small farmer and weaver. He married Hannah, the daughter of Samuel Cheetham, who was a watch and clock maker, and was, consequently, considered something better in condition than common in those days. My grandfather had a family of, I believe, six sons and two daughters; and Daniel, my father, was the youngest of his children. The house in which my grandfather lived was situated at Back o'th' Brow. It was an old timber and daub house, with thatched roof, low windows, and a porch. I saw it after it was abandoned and was tottering to its fall. There had been a garden beside it, but the fences were then tore down, the beds trampled, and a few stumps of trees, with sprouts of sweet herbs shooting amongst struggling weeds, marked what it had been. The door of this ruined dwelling was the first that opened at Middleton for the reception of Methodist preachers; and John and Charles Wesley, John Nelson, Thomas Taylor, and many of the first promulgators of their doctrines, had addressed their humble and simple hearers on the floor of that ruined dwelling. The house stood about some three score yards from the arched bridge over the Irk, in the direction towards the Free School, and the cart road now passes over its site. My grandfather and all his family had been strict church-goers, but on their joining the Metho-

dists, their attendance at church was less constant than it had been. The rector one day in conversation with my grandfather expressed his regret at the change, and wondered what made him dissatisfied with his religion. He replied that he was not certified as to the state of his soul, nor with the way in which he was bringing up his family. Why, asked the rector, what did he desire or expect on the score of religion? He came regularly to church; he took the sacrament, and paid all dues and oblations; and what could he do more? He thought that my grandfather would scarcely mend that religion, whatever party he joined. He might consider himself quite as safe in returning to the church, as he would be in remaining with his new friends. No argument, however, could satisfy my grandfather, who had become "convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of a judgment to come;" who felt the necessity of "justification by faith," of "saving grace," and of "being born again." In short, my grandfather exhibited so much of the "new light," that the worthy pastor, dazzled, probably, if not illumined, gave up the attempt at reclamation, and my grandfather and his family remained Methodists.

Whether or not Madam Ann Bamford, the lady before mentioned, had given up all thoughts of marriage, or whether she ever entertained any, does not appear; but, as if she were wishful to do some justice to the ancient stock, she came to my grandfather's house at Middleton, saw his family, and conversed with them. It was even added, that she expressed a particular preference for my father, then a child, and proposed to adopt him, and make him her heir, but that my grandfather, whose views "were not of this world," declined the lady's offer; alleging that the possession of wealth would only lead this child into temptations, and might perhaps cause the loss of his soul eternally. It was after this incident, as was said, that Madam Ann directed her attention to another quarter in search of an heir and successor. Certain it is, that at her death she willed the estate and property to a William Bamford who was not at all of the old stock, but was said to be descended from a family settled in Staffordshire.

My grandmother, in her mature years, acted as a midwife ; and herself and another dame at Hollinwood were the only two on this side of the country who then practised the obstetric art. Surgeons were never called to act in those days, except in perilous cases ; for wives and mothers of the humble classes had not as yet become reconciled to a custom which one cannot but wish should be repugnant to their private feelings.

My great-grandfather, Samuel Cheetham, was a thorough "King's man." During the troubles in 1745, he loaded his gun, and swore he would blow out the brains of any rebel who interfered with him ; and judging from his conduct on several other occasions, there is but small reason for supposing he would not have been as good as his word. On the approach of the Scottish army towards Manchester, the Assheton family at Middleton Hall retired into Yorkshire, leaving my progenitor and one trusty servant to secrete the plate and the other valuables which the family had not had time or convenience for carrying with them. These articles were placed in a chest, and buried by the two confidants in the stable-court at midnight, the place being afterwards paved and strewn over with hay seeds. The Scotch army having entered Manchester, lost not much time in proceeding to ascertain what good things lay within their reach in the surrounding districts. Middleton received a speedy visit. My ancestor and his assistant were on the premises when a party of horsemen entered the hall yard, and the commander, leaping from his steed, flung the reins to the poor waiting-man, who, on receiving them, sighed deeply. "Hoot, mon ! wot d'ye sigh for ?" asked the Scot, as if he were surprised to hear such an escape of feeling from an English retainer. "It's mi way, sir," replied the servant, meekly taking charge of the steed. The party having searched the hall, without finding either money or plate, which they seemed mostly to be in pursuit of, they came forth to take their departure, when the officer espying my great-grandfather, demanded of him—"Waur's the heed inn in the toon ?" "Gullook !" was the immediate reply. Supposing that he had not been understood,



the question was repeated more distinctly; "I say, mon, waur's the heed inn in the toon?" "Gullook!" was as promptly replied as before; and in a tone and manner which left no doubt with respect to the feelings of the individual who had been questioned. The officer and his party, however, rode off without stopping to parley with the sturdy Southron.

At this period, and for some time after, party feeling would naturally be in a state of exasperation, and but few opportunities for displaying it would be permitted to pass by the adherents of either the Stuart or the Guelph. If, as we see, during evanescent political squabbles, a bitterness is engendered which would, if it could, give a mortal thrust to its opponent, what must be the deadly hatred of rude minds and stormy hearts alternately suffering and inflicting irreparable wrong, when a population are in a state of civil war, when the sword is made naked avowedly to cut down, to kill, and when neighbourhood and brotherhood are no longer recognised except side by side in camp, or in battle? During such a state of things, many would be the outrages and insults perpetrated by individuals of each party, when one of the other happened to come in their way; and that this zealous forefather of mine was less overbearing than the rudest, I have not much reason to suppose. It was customary in those days for Scotch hawkers to travel slowly and laboriously from town to town, not affecting the gentleman, as they do at present, but carrying huge and weighty packs on their backs, some four feet in length and two or more in depth, as large, in fact, as a family meal ark, and stored with hosiery, drapery, and other necessary articles; tea, coffee, and sugar, not being then in much use amongst the working classes. These packs being securely locked, were generally deposited in some convenient place—the corner of a street, or the side of a friendly door—whilst the chapman went round to a few customers close at hand. Well, my great-grandfather, one day, ere the exasperation of feeling consequent on the rebellion had subsided, met one of those useful and self-minding tradesmen, crossing over the causeway by the mill-doors, at Middleton;

and laying hold of him, demanded that he should say—"Deawn wi'th' Rump" (down with the Rump); an offensive phrase signifying, "Down with the Scottish party." The Scot, of course, would utter nothing of the sort—how was he likely—and he tried to argue with the unreasonable fellow who had him in hand, but to no purpose. "Sithe," said the latter, "ifto dusno say, 'Deawn wi'th' Rump,' theawst goo yed fost into that dam;" pointing to the deep mill-stream just below them. The Scot still would not: my progenitor gripped him firmer; and happy should I have been to have recorded that the traveller had soused him into the water head first. But it was otherwise. Might overcame right on that occasion, as it has on others, both before and since; and the traveller, probably calculating on the loss of time and money which a regular contest might cause him, said at length, "Weel, if it mast be so, it mast be so; doon with the Ramp then." And so he got rid of his pertinacious opponent.

Whilst this surly and stalwart English Saxon was bearding the Scottish officer in the hall yard, as before narrated, my mother's father, Jeffrey Battersby, who was quite his opposite in person, manner, and sentiment, was with the Pretender's party at the Boar's Head, assisting them in the collection of King's taxes, and in the levying of contributions; in which his local knowledge, and his quick perception, would, doubtless, be very useful. He was, when I knew him, a little old man, with sharp features and ruddy complexion. He wore a black coat, of the old-fashioned cut of the time; a waistcoat and small cloths of the same material; with black stockings, and silver buckles at the knees, and on the shoes; on his head he wore a grizzled full-buttoned wig, and a small square-set cocked hat. He walked with a quick short step (toes turned inward), as shoemakers often do; a silver-headed cane steadied his forward gait, his waistcoat was dusted with snuff, and a small leathern apron flapped against him as he tripped on his way.

This quick and lively person, at the time of the appearance of the rebels, would be about twenty-nine years of age; an active, lightsome, free-company keeping young fellow, no



doubt. He was a native of Bury, whence he had probably but recently removed to Middleton, and being an excellent hand at his boot-making, he was employed by most of the genteel families in the neighbourhood. The Ashtons of Alkrington; the Asshetons of Middleton; the Radcliffs of Foxdenton; the Hortons of Chadderton; the Hopwoods of Hopwood; the Starkies of Heywood; and the Bamfords of Bamford, were each, at that time, living in their own paternal mansions, and were severally, as their requirements occurred, the patrons and employers of the young craftsman at Middleton. He was, consequently, personally well known to the heads of these old families; with several of them he was on such terms of freedom as we find frequently existed betwixt the old race of gentry and the better sort of their tenants and tradespeople. Gentlemen then lived as they ought to live; as real gentlemen will ever be found living; in kindness with their tenants; in open-handed charity towards the poor; and in hospitality towards all friendly comers. There were no grinding bailiffs and land-stewards in those days, to stand betwixt the gentleman and his labourer, or his tenant; to screw up rents, to screw down livings, and to invent and transact all little meannesses for so much per annum. Mercenaries of this description were not then prevalent on our Lancashire estates. The gentleman transacted his own business; he met his farmer, or his labourer, face to face. When he did that which was wrong, he was told of it in unmistakable language; or, at any rate, he stood a good chance of being so told. When he did that which was right—which was noble-hearted—he got blessings, no doubt, and made friends who stood by him whilst living, and spoke well of him when dead; and that is a kind of speaking of which one does not hear over-much nowadays. There was no racking up of old tenants; no rooting out of old cottiers; no screwing down of servants' or labourers' wages; no cutting off of allowances, either of the beggar at the door, or the visitor at the servants' hall; no grabbing at waste candle-ends, and musty cheese parings. Gentlemen were gentlemen indeed; as ladies were what they pretended to be,—loaf-givers—dispensers of good.

If they lived carefully, they were not mean. If they lived sumptuously, their waste was scattered at home—on the spot whence it was derived; and those who toiled to produce it had the benefit of it. The treasure and all the fatness of the land was not carried out of the country, to be wasted and thrown away like dust, in the pride and big-babyism of courtly life, nor in the brothels and gambling hells of London, Paris, or other Babylon of the world.

At such a time, and amongst such a race of English gentlemen, was it the lot of this my grandsire to be cast. He was an agreeable person to converse with; droll, witty, and a rhymster also; and as he had not much disinclination to a pipe and a jack of ale, he was frequently, when he went with his work home, called from the servants' hall into the parlour, where his budget of wit, verse, and country news, made him a welcome guest. It will not be presuming too much, if we suppose that some of the gentry of those days were imbued with Jacobitical principles; and to such, in their moments of conviviality and confidence, the following verse, which I have heard sung as one of my grandfather's productions, would no doubt be responded to.

“Jammy sits upon the throne;  
He bears the gowden sceptre;  
He is the darlin' of our hearts;  
He is our right protector.  
Ween tak' yon cuckud by his hurns,  
An' poo him deawn to Dover;  
An' stuff him full o' turmit-tops,  
An' pack him to Hanover.”

In joining the Pretender, and taking the active part he had done, my grandfather had sinned too far to be slightly passed over. On the retreat of the Scottish army, and the reinstatement of the former authority, he was denounced with many others; was arrested, and placed in Lancaster Castle for trial on a charge of high treason. Happy was it then for him that he had made friends of some influential persons, and that neither his ready genius nor his friends forsook him. Many of his fellow-prisoners were taken out of their cells for trial;

and trial was then almost synonymous with conviction, conviction with death. At last it was his turn to be called, and they called him, but the man was raving mad; and the keepers stood aghast, not knowing what to do with the lunatic. He had been expecting his trial from day to day, and had acted his part accordingly; and on the morning on which he was certified it would take place, he thumped his elbow against the bedstead until his pulse beat a hundred and sixty a-minute, and the doctor, on his being sufficiently coerced, and ascertaining that such was his actual condition, declared that he could not be tried. He was consequently passed over, some poor fellow thus meeting his doom before the time, and when the next jail delivery took place, his friends at Middleton and the neighbourhood had so far used their influence that he was amongst those discharged by proclamation. He returned home, probably somewhat wiser for his mad fit, but certainly to take his pipe and potation; to write squibs, satires, and rhymes; and to make the best boots and shoes in the whole country side. Years rolled over him; the blithe young fellow became mellowed down into the more sedate head of a family, though he had always a fund of wit and humour at command. At the age of seventy-eight, he was the little old man I have described; and in the year ninety-six came the finale to all his fancies. He died in the eighty-first year of his age, and was interred in the old yard at Middleton Church. Such were the men and women from whom I derived my being. The rebel blood, it would seem, after all, was the more impulsive; it got the ascendancy—and I was born a Radical.

### CHAPTER III.

OF MIDDLETON, AT THE TIME I HAVE BEEN WRITING  
ABOUT.

READER, having thus described to thee the persons, and conditions, and habits of my forefathers, it may not be going too far from my personal history, if I give thee an idea of the sort of place Middleton was at the time they inhabited it. Beginning with the church, thou must know that externally it was much in the same state as at present. Internally, the chapel of the Asshetons would be somewhat different. The staircase mounting to that piece of "pride" in a place of "humility," the Suffield's pew, did not then cover up and obscure the grave-stone of Colonel Assheton, who commanded the Parliamentary forces of Lancashire during the Civil War of the Commonwealth. The monument of "Old Sir Raphe," the last of the Asshetons of Middleton, was not then in existence, nor were the pennons and flag-staffs, the sword, helmet, and spurs, which always accompany the last of an ancient house to the grave, then suspended in that chapel. Those unsightly things, the pews, more like show-cribs than anything else, a modern invention of sordid pride, lest a poor woman's kirtle should by chance touch a "fine lady's" gown, were not then cumbering and disfiguring either this chapel, or the body of the church. The whole floor was strewn with rushes in winter; and the whole congregation sat on plain oaken benches, the poor and the rich faring alike in the presence of that Being to whom they were taught to pray—"From all blindness of heart;



from pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy ; from envy, hatred, and malice ; Good Lord, deliver us."

The appearance of the chancel was also much different from its present one. A large window with open traceries shed a cheerful and plenteous light on the communion-table, which was surrounded by a curious and quaint-looking oaken railing of spiral staves, carved from the solid piece. The said window then exhibited in its lower compartment, the arms and crests, in stained glass, which now adorn the side windows. Where the benches now stand, were large oaken pews, with carvings and quaint devices. The stalls were in their present state ; and the Archer, the Haughton, and the Tetlow monuments, were not on the walls. In a window of the northern aisle was a representation of a band of archers kneeling, each with his bow on his shoulder, his quiver at his breast, and his name above his head ; tradition representing them as parishioners who were slain at the battle of Flodden Field, under the command of the Black Knight, who won his spurs that day. This emblazonment is now placed in one of the side windows of the chancel, a situation where it certainly is more likely to be preserved than in its former one. There was not then an organ in the singer's gallery ; a tall arch, with zig-zag tracery, sprung from antique pillars at the base of the steeple, and spanned high above the heads of choristers and musicians. A large and bold emblazonment of the Royal arms, with the initials " A. R." at the two upper corners, and the motto, " Semper eadem," at the bottom, hung in front of the singers' gallery. On the walls betwixt the aisles hung several large tablets containing lists of benefactions to the poor, which have recently been removed to more fitting places. The font then stood beneath the said gallery : the pulpit, a plain oaken one, was placed against the centre pillar on the north side of the middle aisle ; and the congregation, as I before said, were arranged on seats, their feet in the rushes ; and neither hassocks, nor foot-boards, nor lolling cushions, were then deemed indispensable to a becoming discharge of religious duties. The galleries, on neither side, would probably then be placed ; nor would that piece of gim-crackery,



the painted and pannelled pew, be stuck out above, more like a garish ball-room than a place for repentance and humiliation. But this has also passed away.

Outside of the yard wall, towards the north, stood an old thatched timber and daub house, which one entered down a step, through a strong low door with a wooden latch. This was "Old Joe Wellins's," the church alehouse, a place particularly resorted to by rough fellows when they had a mind to a private drinking bout. The sacred edifice itself is dedicated to Saint Leonard, the patron of thieves, and whether or not thieves and outlaws felt more assured than common under the wing, as it were, of their saint, it was a current tradition in my younger days, that more than one of "the gentlemen roadsters" who lived by levying contributions on the northern highways, made it his "boozing ken," or place of concealment and repose after their foraging expeditions: Nevison and Turpin were especially mentioned as having frequented this house. When this old building was pulled down several curious antique coins were found; of what date no one who saw them could tell. On the other side of the church, the space which is now occupied as a burial-ground, was a large and excellent bowling-green, which was much frequented by the idle fellows of the village, who preferred ale-bibbing in the sun before confinement on the loom or at the lap-stone. At last it was broken up and the games put a stop to, chiefly, it was said, because the late steward under the Sufields could not, when he resorted to the place, overawe, or keep the rustic frequenters in such respectful bounds as he wished to do: and from this statement I cannot withhold my belief; for it was just such an action as those who knew him would expect from the man.

The bridge over the Irk, at Back-o'th'-Brow, was a wooden one with hand rails. On the other side of the stream, on the right hand, were three or four thatched cottages, in the usual style; a barn and shippon stood on the left; whilst the Irk itself, then a stream like crystal, rippled and dimpled away over a channel of smooth sand beds, and dark gravel mingled with white pebbles which, like drops of unmelted snow, lay shim-

mering beneath the ripples. Trout were to be found then in the dark old stockholes, where the water was deep and quiet ; and loaches lay basking and wallowing their green backs scarcely distinguishable from the dark pebbles.

Owler Bridge, which a little further eastward crosses another branch of the Irk, was to be much dreaded. The field along which the path lay betwixt Back-o'th'-Brow and Owler Bridge, was said to be thronged by spirits, whilst " fairees " were frequently seen dancing and gambolling on the bridge, and the bank of the stream on either side. Woe to the wight or the wean, who had to pass that way on a starless windy night ! My father, when a boy, went to take lessons from a wise-man at Hilton-fold, and consequently he had to traverse the haunted field, and to pass the perilous bridge ; but he seldom forgot to hum a psalm or hymn tune whilst on his way. It was rumoured that a murder had been committed in that field, and if a strange looking bone was found, it was supposed to have been one belonging to the murdered person. A dreaded place was that.

The Free Grammar School was also a haunted place. The endowment, for those days, was liberal, and the establishment possessed an extensive reputation. Gentlemen's sons, from many parts of the country, were sent to Middleton to receive their education preparatory to going to college. Some, around the neighbourhood, came to school on ponies, which in summer time they turned into the paddock opposite the school, until at night they were again mounted to return home. Some of these youths were wild and reckless, no doubt ; and others were said to be more " deeply learned " than the master supposed them to be. On one occasion when they had the school to themselves, they set about raising the devil ; and after a due course of conjuration the " dark being " appeared, and stamping a hole into a flag with his foot—the mark of which was shown in my days—he asked what they wanted. The conjurers, being terrified, wished him to retire as quietly as he came, but that he would not do, so they then demanded that he should make a rope out of the sand which lay in the sand-bed at the foot of the church-bank, and he was busy at the work, when the head master fortunately came, and with the

highest ceremonial dismissed him and saved the scholars whom he fain would have taken, whereupon he became so enraged, that he flew away in a flash of fire, breaking down an entire window, and part of the wall of the school. The school was conducted by a head master and an usher; the former generally teaching at the northern end, and the latter at the southern one. It was also customary for each to reside in a spacious chamber over the part of the school in which he taught, to which chamber access was gained up a flight of wooden stairs, by a door at the back, and through a dark place with which the scholars were wont to associate many superstitious terrors. One of these head masters was a Mr. Dean, a curate, who on a certain day, as the story narrated, on entering his room at the noon-hour of dismissal, met a clergyman in full canonicals, with a book open in his hand as if he were going to read a funeral service. The appearance passed Mr. Dean, who, in great surprise, turned and looked at it. It went out at the door, and apparently towards the stairs, but on Mr. Dean's returning to watch it down, it was not to be seen, nor could anything whatever be heard of any such person having been seen by others about the place. Mr. Dean took it as a warning to himself, and soon afterwards he sickened and died. The school-lane was also haunted by an apparition which came sometimes in one form, and sometimes in another. Two men, it was said, of adverse parties met here during the Civil Wars, when one killed the other, and the deceased's spirit had ever since haunted the place.

Stanicliffe was frequented by a demon which has but very recently quitted his haunt. At an old gloomy looking house, —partly of timber and partly of brick work,—situated on the brow of the hill, and looking, as it were, over the rindle towards Boarshaw, lived, during the Civil Wars, one of the Hopwood retainers, named Blomoley. He would seem to have been a man of ferocious disposition, since his name has been handed down in traditions, the fearfulness of which time has not diminished. Several men he was said to have wantonly put to death with his own hand, during those lawless periods; one he shot on his farm yard, and the bullet, after



quitting the man's body, passed through two of his own barn doors. Ever after, until a comparatively recent date, the house and premises he occupied were haunted by "fyerin" (boggarts or apparitions) which came sometimes in the form of a calf, sometimes in that of a huge black dog, and sometimes in the human form, but hideous and terrible. A heavy nailed door, which was hung in such a manner that it shut to with violence, would at times open of itself before a stranger, or one of the family. A dog, or a calf, would at times trot along the passage before a person seeking admittance; the door would open wide; the person would enter the dwelling part, but nothing could be seen or heard of the mysterious appearance. At the dead of night, sounds would be heard as if persons were holding a conversation in whispers; doleful cries would break forth, or a crash would resound as if every piece of crockery in the dwelling was broken, when, in the morning, everything would be found in its place. I am not saying that I credit these accounts, but they were certainly narrated to me by one who had lived in the building during many years: one who could not gain anything by stating that which he did not believe to be true; and whose account was furthermore subsequently corroborated by another of the same family. It was even added, and confirmed in like manner, that other members of the family, besides the narrator, whilst sitting by the fire at night, had seen the cream-mug, or the drink bottle, move from the hearth to the hob, or from the hob to the hearth, without any visible being touching the vessels. Other things in the house were also frequently shifted, but nothing was ever broken; and the noises, appearances, and displacements, at length became so little thought of, that the common observation would be, "Oh! it's nobbut Owd Blomoley;" or, "Th' owd lad's agate agen." The house subsequently underwent some alteration, and about fourteen years ago it was pulled down, and another was rebuilt on its site; since which time, I have not heard of any disturbance at the place. The clough or dingle at the base of the meadow on which the house stood, retains the name of "Blomoley Cloof."

The noticing of these supposed supernatural appearances

may seem puerile to some readers. The suppositions in themselves may be so ; but taken in connection with, and affecting as they did, in a degree, the minds and manners of the rural population of the period, they are of more consequence than may at the first glance be apparent. At all events, in giving an account of a place and its inhabitants in past times, one cannot well refrain from alluding to whatever might have influenced their actions, any more than one can remain silent with respect to the actions themselves. I will, therefore, once for all mention, that but few of the lonely, out-of-the-way places—the wells, the bye-paths, the dark old lanes, the solitary houses—escaped the reputation of being haunted. “Boggarts,” “fyerin,” “witches,” “fairees,” “clap-cans,” and such like beings of terror, were supposed to be lurking in almost every retired corner, or sombre-looking place ; whence they come forth at their permitted hours, to enjoy their nocturnal freedom. Ruffian Lane—the old road to Hopwood Hall—was one of these haunted places : haunted once, as its name would purport, by less harmless beings than “boggarts.” A footpath, leading through certain fields belonging to the “Black Bull” public-house, was notoriously the resort of “fyerin’ (spirits) : and here, indeed, there was reason to be shown why it should be so, since that ominous and awe-creating plant, Saint John’s Wort, grew there in its pale, feathery pride. The present road—then a retired one, and overshadowed by a tall hedge and spreading trees—which leads from the bottom of Church Street to the Free School, was then nightly traversed by the appearance of a large four-footed animal, sometimes in the likeness of a dog or a bear, with great glaring eyes ; at other times it would start up like a beautiful child, and moving before to a certain place, would disappear. The churchyard could not, of course, be free from supernatural appearances ; and of the few who ventured through it after night-fall—the road then leading that way—not many left it whose hair was not standing on end. The path leading from the southern steps of the churchyard, down to the “Gypsy Croft” and the highway, was another haunt of these appearances ; whilst the solitary footpath, which led from the same steps along the



Warren, beneath the tall elms and sycamores, past the lonely summer-house, and down the wooded bank to the highway, seems to have been a favourite promenade to the beings of another world.

The Rectory was then an old irregular-looking edifice, built partly of brick and partly of stone, with a moat around it, and shot holes in the walls for musketry or cross-bows. The present unsightly brick wall, fronting the highway, was not then in existence. In place of it was a green sod rampart, planted with hawthorns and hedge-shrubs, which were protected by a low neat palisading, so that passengers, whilst walking under the beech trees, could enjoy a look at the fields, and into the shrubberies skirting the garden. Gentlemen in those days were not afraid, it would seem, of the poor man or woman enjoying a look through their hedges, nor catching a sweet wind-waft of their rosebuds, or apple-bloom, as they travelled the droughty dusty high-road.

The old Hall was perhaps one of the finest relics of the sort in the county. It was built of plaster and framework, with panels, carvings, and massy beams of black oak, strong enough for a mill floor. The yard was entered through a low wicket, at a ponderous gate; the interior of the yard was laid with small diamond-shaped flags; a door led on the left into a large and lofty hall, which was hung round with matchlocks, swords, targets, and hunting weapons, intermingled with trophies of the battle-field and the chase. But all disappeared before the spirit of Vandalism which commenced with the Harboard accession to the property, and their transference of power to one whose chief thought seemed to be how he might by any means increase the amount of remittances to his employer. Not a vestige of the edifice now remains. The exact site is at present unoccupied, but is understood to be let for the erection of a cotton-mill. A couple of factories and a gasworks are already close to the spot. The great oaken barn, before mentioned, and a cottage or two, and a remnant of the stabling, are the only vestiges remaining on the place. And so passes the vain stability of this world.

Having thus, as it were, led the reader, not only into the

presence of my later ancestors, but also into the country which they inhabited, giving him glimpses of the manners, legends, and superstitions of those days, and thereby enabling him to perceive the great change which has come over the inhabitants of these parts, as well as over the country itself—having thus, in a measure, discharged a duty to some who are no more, and to scenes and things which have departed with them, I may, with a less divided retrospection, take up the narrative of my own life, and to that task—craving the reader's kind indulgence—I now address myself.

## CHAPTER IV.

### EARLY IMPRESSIONS—MIDDLETON REFORMERS—MEETING AT ROYTON—DENIAL OF JUSTICE.

MANY of the earliest of my impressions were calculated to make me feel, and think, and reflect, and thus I became, imperceptibly, as it were, and amidst all the exuberant lightsomeness of childhood, impressible and observant. The notice I took of my mother's anguish and her tears (as before mentioned), whilst it made me hateful of all wrong—hateful so far as my young heart could be so—disposed me, at the same time, to be pitiful towards all suffering. It was the means of calling into action two of the strongest and most durable impulses of my heart—justice and mercy. Hence I was, in my infantile degree, a friend to every living being that suffered wrong, and an enemy to, or rather a disliker of, every living being that inflicted it. The cause of the unfortunate was mine own cause, from that of the crushed worm, which I put aside from my path, to that of the more noble animals, the dog, the steer, and the horse, when they suffered outrage at the hand of ruthless man. Everything which could not plead its own cause had a pleader in my heart. The horse had an especial one, inasmuch, probably, as whatever pain he might suffer, the expression of it was almost denied to him. The dog could howl, the steer could bellow, but the noble horse was mutely endurant; and these impulses, notwithstanding all that reason, and convenience, and necessity, as we term our palliatives, have at times suggested, and would still suggest, I never could put aside, never could subdue. So in

this instance again, "Out of the eater came forth meat"; out of the evil came forth goodness.

The first book which attracted my particular notice was "The Pilgrim's Progress," with rude woodcuts; it excited my curiosity in an extraordinary degree. There was "Christian knocking at the strait gate," his "fight with Apollyon," his "passing near the lions," his "escape from Giant Despair," his perils at "Vanity Fair," his arrival in "the land of Beulah," and his final passage to "Eternal Rest"; all these were matters for the exercise of my feeling and my imagination. And then, when it was explained to me, as it was by my mother and my sister, how that Christian was a godly man, who left his wife, and his children, and all he had in the world, to go forth and seek the blessed land afar off; and that, through many trials, and perils, and hardships, he arrived at that land, and entered another life, never to return; that his wife and family, in hopes of joining him, also left their home and journeyed the same weary and perilous way, my heart was filled with pleasing, yet melancholy impressions. The whole pilgrimage was to me a story mournfully soothing, like that of a light coming from an eclipsed sun.

Others of my early impressions were also of a saddening nature, and I mention them, not because I would be understood to have been less joyous and playsome than were other children of my age—for I was probably quite as much so as the generality of my playmates were—but because, with me, the bright moments are but dimly remembered now, whilst the more sombre impressions remain distinctly present as I now write. The reader, however, need not be afraid of my drawing a totally darksome picture; there may be some strong clouding here and there. There must be if truth and nature are adhered to, and from them we assuredly will not depart.

And now came to myself and my childish playmates strange and alarming rumours of a dreadful war. "The war," we heard, was coming afar off; the French people were bringing it, and "the war" would come to Middleton, and kill all the fathers, and mothers, and children that it could find. This was a sad prospect to me, and I pondered it over until I hit



on a scheme which I thought would avert the danger. This was that I and all our family, at least, should hide in the wooden coal-shed at the Free Grammar School, and there I was quite certain "the war" could never find us.

One incident of my childhood will serve to show the sort of daily, fireside education which my parents bestowed on their children. I mention it to their honour, and not from a wish to claim any precocity of intellect, which indeed I did not possess. I was probably about three years of age when some one made me a present of a little tin can, as a plaything, and to sup my porridge and milk from. I slept with Sally Owen, a young woman who, having been left an orphan and brought up in my grandfather's family, was now living more as a sister than as a servant with my uncle Thomas. Well, this little tin can nothing could prevail on me to part from, and I was allowed to take it with me to bed. Probably Sally Owen would find it a rather sharp article to turn upon at night. However that were, when I awoke in the morning Sally Owen was gone, and my little bright plaything was gone also. I then cried out, and when the kind-hearted creature came to the bedside, I learned from her replies that she had taken my can, and that if I was not a good boy I must not have it any more. So, looking in her face, I said, "Sally, whot dus Katekiss say?" "Say? why wot dus it say?" asked Sally. "Dus it no say, thou shalt not steal?" "Aye, it dus," replied Sally, "an' wotbi that?" "Well, then," was my rejoinder, "thou shalt not steal my little can." Her tender eyes were brimming full; she snatched me out of bed, gave me my little can, and took me to my mother, who also shed tears of joy when she heard what I had said. "Oh!" she would sometimes ejaculate, "theaw shud habin kess'nt Jeffrey or Daniel."

My father, as before stated, was a reader, and amongst other books which he now read was Paine's "Rights of Man." He also read Paine's "Age of Reason," and his other theological works, but they made not the least alteration in his religious opinions. Both he and my uncle had left the society of Methodists, but to the doctrines of John Wesley they continued adherents so long as they lived. At the commencement

of the French Revolution a small band only of readers and inquirers after truth was to be found in Middleton. They were called "Jacobins" and "Painites," and were treated with much obloquy by such of their bigoted neighbours as could not or would not understand that other truths existed in the world than "were dreamt of in their philosophy." This band of thinkers included Edmund Johnson, a druggist and apothecary; Jacob Johnson, his brother, a weaver and herb doctor; Simeon Johnson, another brother, weaver; Samuel Ogden, shoemaker; Thomas Bamford, my uncle; and Daniel, my father. They met at each other's houses to read such of the current publications as their small means allowed them to obtain, and to converse on the affairs of the nation, and other political subjects. They were also supporters of Parliamentary Reform, as it was then advocated by the Duke of Richmond, Mr. Pitt, and other distinguished characters. This notice will explain the rancour which they had to endure, some traits of which I shall proceed to describe.

One Middleton wakes, as I remember, I, a mere child, sat on the steps of my father's dwelling, watching the holiday folks draw their rush-carts towards the church. They went close past our door; very grand and gaudy the drawers and carts were, with ribbons, and streamers, and banners, and garlands, and silver ornaments, and morrice bells, and other music, quite joyous and delightful. At length came a cart more richly decked than others, on the flake of which behind was placed the figure of a man, which I thought was a real living being. A rabble which followed the cart kept throwing stones at the figure, and shouting, "Tum Paine a Jacobin!" "Tum Paine a thief!" "Deawn wi' o' th' Jacobins!" "Deawn wi' th' Painites!" whilst others with guns and pistols kept discharging them at the figure. They took care to stop when they came to the residence of a reformer; the shouting and the firing were renewed, and then they moved on. Poor Paine was thus shot in effigy on Saturday, repaired, re-embellished, and again set upright on Sunday, and "murdered out-and-out" on Monday, being again riddled with shot, and finally burned. I, of course, became a friend of Thomas Paine's. Such was

one of the modes of annoyance and persecution to which the few who dared be honest were subjected by the sires and grandsires of the present race of reforming Englishmen. But this was perfect amenity compared with what took place at Royton.

That village was in those days looked upon as the chief resort of Jacobins on that side of Manchester. A few clever, sensible men lived there also, as well as at Middleton, but those of Royton would seem to have taken more active measures for the promotion of reform than did others living in the neighbouring districts. I well remember, in the dolorous days of ninety-two, or three, a small band from Royton perambulating our secluded nook of the town, and singing a piece, one verse of which was as follows :—

“ Our masters play us roguish pranks ;  
Our bankrupt bankers close their banks ;  
Which makes our wives and children cry.  
But times shall alter by and by.”

One forenoon we were alarmed by the appearance of men armed with thick cudgels and bludgeons, who passed by our house in groups, swearing and threatening what they would do at the “ Painites ” when they returned. They came from Ringley and Radcliffe, and other places ; desperate and ruthless men they seemed, and we children were so terrified that we crept into the hen-roost as a place of the greatest safety. Many eventful hours of anxious expectation succeeded ; my father did not remove his family, but I believe he made preparations for self-defence if attacked. The ruffians, however, returned past our house without offering any serious molestation, my father not being a man slightly to be put aside ; my uncle also being at hand. Not so, however, did the scoundrels withhold from poor Samuel Ogden ; for there they broke open his door, pulled him out of the house, broke his windows and some furniture, and maltreated his person ; for none of which outrages did the law ever afford him any satisfaction. The occasion on which these brutes were let loose in the country, was as follows.



On the 21st of April, 1794, a public meeting, for the promotion of Parliamentary Reform, was appointed to be held at Thorpe, near Royton. It was called by a few friends to reform who were correspondents of the society in London ; \* and the purpose of the originators of the meeting was to get a petition adopted, praying Parliament to grant an amendment in the representation of the people. Previous to the commencement of the proceedings, a number of well-wishers to the cause, who had come from a distance, together with several promoters of the meeting, were assembled at "The Light Horseman" public-house, in Royton Lane. They were taking refreshments, and arranging the proceedings, when a mob of several hundred people, led up by one Harrop, of Barrowshaw, an atrocious ruffian, came in front of the house, and with shouts of "Church an' King for ever !" "Deawn wi' th' Jacobins !" began to smash the windows, and break open the doors. As many of the mob were armed with clubs and staves, and there was a supply of stones in the lane, the few inside could neither make effectual resistance to their entrance, nor defend themselves from violence. The mob broke everything down before them. The windows were smashed ; the doors and shutters were kicked into splinters. The loyal sign of the old pensioner was torn down ; every article of furniture was broken ; the glasses, jugs, and other vessels, were dashed on the floor, and trampled under foot ; the bar was gutted ; the cellars were entered, and the ale and liquors were drunk or poured on the floor ; and such being the violence committed on the property, it may be supposed that the obnoxious persons would not be suffered to escape. Oh, no !—this was a real "Church and King mob," and was too faithful to its employers to suffer the "Painites" to escape without punishment. Whilst some of the brutes were guzzling, and others were breaking furniture, others again were beating, and kicking, and maltreating in various ways the persons found in the house. Several of these were lamed ; others were seriously crushed and injured in their persons.

\* The Corresponding Society formed in 1792 for the promotion of Parliamentary Reform.



The constables of the place had been called upon by the peaceably disposed inhabitants to act, but they declined to interfere, and the mob had their own way. Mr. Pickford, of Royton Hall, a magistrate, never made his appearance, though he lived within a few score yards of the scene of riot, and was supposed to have been at home all the time during which the outrage was perpetrated. He was afterwards known as Sir Joseph Ratcliffe, of Milnes Brig, in Yorkshire. Such of the Reformers as had the good fortune to escape out of the house, ran for their lives, and sought hiding-places wherever they could be found; whilst the parson of the place, whose name was Berry, standing on an elevated situation, pointed them out to the mob, saying—"There goes one; and there goes one!" "That's a Jacobin; that's another!" and so continued until his services were no longer effectual. A few stout-hearted reformers who had possession of one part of the house would not be beaten like children; they retaliated blow for blow, and kick for kick, until the cowards who assailed them were fain to pause. The strife outside was then nearly over, and these few reformers consented, at length, to go with their assailants before the magistrate above mentioned. About half a score of reformers, in the whole, were conducted as prisoners to Royton Hall, where they were placed in a stable, and treated with every contumely, until the great man was ready to receive them. They were then shown into his presence, and were ultimately held in bail to appear at Lancaster, to answer a charge of rioting. At the August assizes, the case was traversed; and in the spring assizes of 1795, the Grand Jury having "found a true bill," the "rioters" were arraigned; but as the fourth witness for the prosecution was under examination, the judge stopped the trial, and the defendants were discharged. The reformers caused bills of indictment to be presented to the Grand Jury, against a number of the real rioters; but, as in the case of the later affair in Manchester, the same Grand Jury which could find true bills against the unoffending people, could not find any bills against the guilty parties. The persons who had been so shamefully maltreated could

not obtain any redress at law; even the poor old soldier, whose house had been broken into and plundered in open sunlight, never received compensation. Everything he had in the world was destroyed or carried away; he was a ruined man, and a ruined man he remained to the end of his days. Such was a specimen of "Justice of the Peace" justicing, of "Church and King Parsons" parsoning; and of "Grand Juries" jurying, in the blessed times of 1794! With such an example as this on the records of the county, need we wonder at what took place in 1819?

## CHAPTER V.

“Straight is the lane that has never a turning :  
Long is the joy that has never a mourning.”

It must have been when I was in the sixth year of my age, that one day as I was rolling on the floor with my younger brother and sister, we were surprised and checked by the appearance of a good-looking, fresh complexioned gentleman, who asked for my father. My mother respectfully attended on the visitor, and my father was called up from his loom in the cellar where he was at work. My father, my mother, and the gentleman had some conversation, after which my father put on his better coat and hat, and went out with the gentleman to the place, as I have since understood, where his horse was put up. My father returned, after being absent a short time, and I recollect well, having noticed a change in the look and manner of both my parents, my mother frequently applying her apron to her eyes, whilst my father was quite cheerful. The visitor who had caused this change was one of the churchwardens for the township of Manchester, and his business at our house was to induce my father to undertake the management of a manufactory of cotton goods at the work-house for that township. The terms offered were such as my father accepted, and on a day appointed, after appearing before the board of parish officers, and being by them approved of, the agreement was ratified, and my father thence-forward applied sedulously to his new avocation, sleeping at the work-house, boarding at the governor's table, during the week days, and spending his Saturday evenings and his Sundays with his family at home. He must have discharged the duties of his

office in a manner which gave satisfaction, inasmuch as some time after his appointment, he became governor of the work-house, and my mother governess ; my uncle Thomas at the same time being appointed to succeed my father in the manufactory.

And now, with respect to that beloved relation, let me say a word. He was to all the children of his brother a second father, whilst to their father he was a true brother indeed. A provident counsellor in adversity, what his head advised his hand would assist to effect. In temper he was equable and calm ; steadfast in purpose, and unbendingly upright in his dealings. His religion was that of a devout, but unostentatious Christian, and his outward ceremonial of it was that of John Wesley. In stature he was tall, and of a powerful solidity, whilst the clothed appearance of his person and limbs, indicated symmetry united with the fastness of great strength. His features were such as are generally deemed handsome, their expression was indicative of a calm, thoughtful, and benevolent mind. His complexion was that of raven dark ; and his black glossy hair hung slightly curling over the front of his shoulders. Reader, hast thou ever beheld a half-length "*Salvator Mundi*," by Bartolozzi ? If thou hast—and deem me not impious, for the engraving itself is but the idea of a human genius—if thou hast seen such engraving, then hast thou beheld as good a likeness as could be drawn of the features of my ever-dear uncle Thomas. And, with such a wife as I have described my mother to be ; with such a brother as this, and with five healthy, joysome children, did my father wend his way from Middleton, and take up his abode in his new situation at Manchester.

This was to us a vast and surprising change in life. At our little country home, everything was conducted in that plain thrifty way, by means of which a good house-wife renders her cottage so comfortable, and her family so well provided, out of comparatively very small incomings. Our fare was of the simplest kind, and far from profuse, whilst our clothing, though cleanly and well mended, was such as would raise a smile amongst the mothers of these days ; big boys, as well as



recover our surprise, my dear mother, my uncle, and the children were enfolding us in their arms.

Here was a theatre for the active habits and kindly feelings of my dear parents and my uncle. A new life, a confiding spirit, was infused into the poor inmates. The men found friendly advisers in all their difficulties and vexations, and there were such even in this sheltering place. They found also encouragers and assistants in the prosecution of every good purpose, as well as power which would be obeyed in whatever was right and necessary. The poor orphans, as well as ourselves, had now a kind father, mother, and uncle; the sick were tenderly nursed and provided for; the aged were treated with indulgent regard, whilst the healthy were put to useful employment, and continued at it day by day. My mother's quick eye was everywhere; her active step was unwearied; no dust, or slop, or sluttishness, would she tolerate: there was a place for everything, and everything would she have in its place. Moving about in a morning in her skirted bed-gown, the long sleeves turned up, and with her milk-white mob-cap fringing the healthy bloom of her cheek, she enforced activity and cleanliness in the servants, and nurses, and attendants; there was a movement to work whenever her step approached; a stirring to industry, whenever her voice was heard.

Thus everything being adjusted, and the routine of management and subordination working in regularity, my parents would probably hope that a long day of prosperity was before them. Who can tell the fond anticipations in which they would indulge? Who could estimate the depth of gratitude which in fervent thanks they would endeavour to express towards "the Giver of all good?" He alone to whom those thanks were addressed—He alone could know how truly grateful were my poor parents for this gleam of prosperity. But even now, the fiat which makes mute all joy had gone forth. God would have His own when He would. The death-smell was amongst us; the doomed were moving towards their unseen grave.

Several cases of virulent small-pox broke out amongst the

children of the house. My little sister Hannah, then in the fourth year of her age, and as lovely a specimen of child-like beauty as I ever beheld, took the disorder and died; and in twenty-eight days afterwards, my little brother James, then in the second year of his age, followed her to eternity. A few weeks only had passed, when my grandfather Battersby died, at Middleton; and we were mourning, after mourning, three persons of our family and kindred having thus been called to another world. But further trials were yet at hand.

My mother bore up like a Christian heroine; my father submitted in silent resignation; whilst my uncle was probably as much affected as any of the three. Weeks, however, wore away, grief was mitigated, and tears were again almost dried, when a female whose manners and conversation indicated that she had seen better days, was announced to be ill of the fever. Everything was done for her which good nursing and the medical skill of those days could effect, but she continued to get worse and her recovery becoming hopeless, she wished some one to make prayer for her. My uncle, as humane as he was trustful in God, knelt down by her beside, as had been his wont in other cases, and prayed with a solemnity and feeling which softened and comforted her heart, and she begged he would visit her again before she died; he did so, and with thanks on her lips, and an assurance of a joyful hereafter, she expired. In a few days my uncle became unwell; his indisposition increased; the strong man was prostrated by the infecting disorder; and his last words were, "Hannah, I'm coming! Jimmy, I'm coming!"

I slept in the same room with my uncle during the former part of his illness, and I took the disorder, which was now pronounced to be fever of a malignant kind, or what would be called in these days, a typhus of the worst type. My mother would nurse me herself as much as her other pressing duties permitted; at all events, she was determined that I should not suffer from want of attendance during the night, and she had me removed to her own room and her own bed, my father going to sleep in another apartment. She was tenderly assiduous, nursing me as a dove would its young; but I

sank and sank, until at last consciousness departed and I knew no more. How long I remained in this condition I have no knowledge, but it must have been during a considerable time, probably a week or two; and when consciousness returned, I was in another bed in the same room, and my mother was delirious and raving in her own bed beside me.

Some days and nights passed in this manner, my mother at times insensible, and at other times praying on behalf of herself and family; my father also frequently knelt at her bedside, praying God, "if it so pleased Him, to let this cup pass away: nevertheless, not his will but God's be done." At length, one night, as I recollect, my father, my brother, my sister, and the nurses stood around my mother's bed. She was conscious of her approaching end, and wished to take leave of us all. That was a solemn time: she would have me wrapt in blankets and brought to her. Every one was in tears. My father besought God to sustain and comfort her now that all human aid had failed; and she invoked blessings on the husband and children she was about to leave. As the nurse held me I stretched out my arms towards my dying parent, when, blessing me with a fervent blessing, she said I should soon be better when she was gone. I remember no more of this sad scene. My father went back to the bed from which he had arisen to take this last farewell; and the next thing that I recollect was my awakening one night, and becoming aware of a terrible stillness. I listened to hear my mother breathing, or praying, but nothing could I hear, and I lay some time in a state of sad foreboding. After gazing long in the darkness, I thought I could perceive that the curtains of my mother's bed were drawn back, and that something white and perfectly still lay there, which I concluded was my mother's corpse, and I began to cry. In a short time there was a light in the next room, and a sound of feet, and doors were opened and shut, and there was much passing and repassing, with the clatter of tea-things; and the persons began to talk, some of them in a very cheerful strain; and they seemed to be sitting down to tea. I then called out and one or two came into the

room, and spoke comfortingly to me. They also wrapped me up in blankets and carried me into the room they had come from, and in passing my mother's bed I saw her lying dead and covered with a sheet.



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## CHAPTER VI.

### LIVING BESIDE THE DEAD—A NURSE.

IN the next room were the nurse and several women, with a young man who, since the death of my uncle, had superintended the manufactory. There was a good fire in the place; the kettle was on the hob, and they were preparing to have "a comfortable cup of tea," with "something in it," previous to washing and laying-out my mother's corpse. I was warmly wrapped up, and placed in as easy a position as my weakness would allow, in a two-armed chair by the fireside. This was another trial to me; the time was midnight, or early morning; the room was the one in which I had been accustomed to meet my father, mother, uncle, and other members of our family. It had been our household room, but none of our family were now present; the voices I heard, the faces I beheld, were mostly those of strangers, and I felt a sense of loneliness such as I never before experienced. The women, stout, hardy working women, who had probably been early and late, toiling in the dangerous task of attending the sick and dying, and more especially my poor mother and father, partook of their refecation with a zest and a cheerfulness of conversation, which, however natural it might be in persons of their situation, presented such a contrast to the silence of the other room, and was so little in accordance with my present feelings, that I burst into tears. The kind-hearted creatures no sooner saw my distress than they did everything they could to console me, telling me my mother was now happy, that my father would soon be better, and that I should quickly be able to run about again; and so kind and assiduous were they in their

endeavours to mitigate my grief, that at length the feeling of desolateness which had afflicted me passed away. I felt that all friends were not yet lost to me. I thanked them with renewed tears, and with expressions of trustful confidence; and after partaking their refreshment—which their hearty enjoyment of it made me think must be very good—they put me to bed in another room, and went to perform their necessary offices to my mother's dead body. The funeral took place on the day following at the old church; and my father was unconscious of her decease, being himself at the time in a delirium of the fever.

As my mother had foretold, soon after her death I began rapidly to recover, and my father being placed in the same room with me, one nurse attended to both of us during the night. This night-nurse was an elderly female, whose name I will not mention, because, although during years and years afterwards the very word inspired me with horror, it is the distinctive appellation of many worthy persons. She was a tall, brown, bony, hard-featured woman, with long tanned arms, and wearing a dark dingy bed-gown, and with a profusion of snuff on her face and on her soiled cap. She had a callous and unfeeling way of performing whatever offices our situation required; and she was probably assigned to this duty more from a belief of her capability to sustain it than from any other qualification. At first the old hag was very attentive, giving us our medicine, or wine, or whatever was necessary, at their prescribed seasons; soon, however, she became neglectful, and somewhat rude, and my father being delirious and incoherent at times, she over-awed and terrified me. At length, one night as I remember, my father being in his better mood, asked her to give him his wine; she said there was none, and when he questioned her as to what had become of it, she straightway opened upon him a torrent of oaths, curses, and abuse, such as I had never heard. She was quite drunk, and he had the strength to tell her audibly that she was "a vile woman"; whereupon she went raving mad, and swore she would murder us both in our beds, and she looked round the place, seemingly for a weapon with which to



dash our brains out. I thereupon called as loudly as I could, but it being midnight, and no one being awake in our part of the house, it was a considerable time, or, at least, so it seemed, before any person came to our assistance; and during that interval, the words, looks, and gestures of the old crone were those of a perfect demoniac. She had drunk every drop of the wine we should have had, and when at length the desired help arrived, she was dragged out of the place, and went blaspheming and yelling down the long corridors and passages, doors closing after her one by one, until her howlings were no longer heard.

After this we had very good nurses, and though my father had a crisis almost as perilous as myself had had, he at length gradually recovered, and we both turned, as it were, though wearily and feebly, into a world, oh! how different from the one we found on our first arrival at this once inviting, but now dolorous place. Brother, sister, grandfather, uncle, mother, five persons out of nine, parts, as it were, of our own being, torn from us in the space of a few brief months. What a change we felt! What a void was around us—and what a diminished and unsheltered group we seemed to be! Surely “the bitterness of death” is in the lonesome desolation of the living; and this bitterness, notwithstanding my naturally cheerful temper and all which kindness could do to console me, was long my portion, until it began to be feared whether or not I should ever be called from “the valley of the shadow of eternity.” We had our sympathisers, however, and though they were of the humblest station of their race, their friendship was probably not the least sincere, nor, consequently, ought it to be the least regarded. When I got strong enough to falter into the yard, I was surrounded by the pleased countenances of children who accompanied me with every demonstration of joy, singing at times a rude rhyme somewhat like the following:—

“Here’s a health to Daniel Bamford,  
Who is so kind and true;  
When he gets better we’ll write him a letter,  
And send it to Middleton too.”

The mature and elderly paupers also would stop, look at me and walk away invoking blessings on "the poor motherless boy."

When my father had completely recovered, he was grieved that my mother had not been buried at Middleton, with her children, as it was her expressed desire to be. He accordingly took measures with a view to having her wish complied with, but Doctor Ashton, who was at the time rector of Middleton and warden of the Collegiate Church at Manchester, refused to grant permission for the removal of her remains, alleging as his reason—and that perhaps a proper one—that the infection of which she died might be communicated to persons attending the ceremony. She therefore remained in her grave, on the north side of the steeple at the Collegiate Church, where my father caused a stone to be placed, with a suitable inscription; but in the alterations which some years ago were made in the churchyard, my mother's gravestone, like many others, disappeared.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A NEW GOVERNESS: PLAYMATES—STRIKING CHARACTERS— DIETARY.

WHILST my father was recovering from his illness, a new governess was appointed in the place of my deceased mother. She was the wife of a Mr. Rose, who had been recently unfortunate in the grocery business. She was a tall, fat, heavy-footed woman, about fifty years of age, I should think, and had once, no doubt, been a fine-looking person. She was well acquainted with all kinds of cookery, and was industrious and managing enough in her way, but that way was quite a different one from the simple housewifery of my mother. She was, however, I believe, good at heart, since she was generally kind and considerate towards us children, whose waywardness at times would probably be quite sufficient to try even a mother's temper, much more that of a mere friendly stranger. When her husband's affairs were arranged, he took the situation of schoolmaster in the house, and as such had his meals at the governor's table with his wife, my father, the superintendent of the manufactory, the apothecary or dispenser of medicine, and sometimes the governor's three children. Mr. Rose was a quiet, mild, elderly person, inclined to corpulence, and apparently satisfied with an easy life. The dispenser of medicine was a little cheerful old man, dressed in black, with thin grey hairs on his head, a white cravat, and a dusting of snuff on his waistcoat; his walk was almost a kind of dance, it was so lightsome, and he went tripping round to his patients, as he called them, every morning, with a small saying or a cheerful word for every one. He was a native of

London, and had moved there in a respectable mercantile sphere, but being suddenly ruined and abandoned by those on whom he thought he had claims of gratitude, he left the place in disgust of mankind, and almost of life, and having, scarcely knowing how or why, wandered into Lancashire, he took a humble situation in a tea warehouse at Manchester, when, his health failing, he was transferred to the workhouse, and on his recovery became the attendant on the physician, and a kind of house apothecary, in which situation, having a small salary and comfortable maintenance, the old gentleman seemed to have become quite happy, and forgetful of his former condition, seldom indeed even alluding to it. The superintendent of the manufactory was the young man I have before mentioned, a native of Middleton, and on his leaving after a short stay, the place was filled by John Haworth, a native of the Forest of Rossendale, who, having in the hey-day of his youth enlisted into the dragoons, had spent the best part of his life as a soldier in the Flanders wars. John was quite an original in his way ; he was huge in stature, massively bony, with but a small portion of fleshy texture to round off the sharp points of his frame. He was very serious and staid in his manners, superstitious in his notions about witches, apparitions, and beings of another world, and equally sincere and credulous in his religious opinions. Yet at times, when something very adverse and unexpected amongst the workmen tried his patience, he would rap out a round regimental oath, and as instantly call it back, as it were, with a "Lord, help us!" "God, forgimmi!" and then he seemed to suppose all was right again. Poor John—he was a true specimen of the fearless, sword-hewing English dragoon, engrafted on the simple, credulous, ineradicable rusticity of the old Lancashire moorlander before the hill-streams were poisoned by dye-vats, and the valleys were studded with smoke funnels. Besides the persons I have noticed who formed my father's more immediate associates, he had a stout assistant also, who helped him in the management of the lunatics, and the refractory paupers, when there were any ; and who also brewed, and did the other cellar and porter's work of the house ; so that on



the governor's side there was no lack of power for coercion when it was necessary, but that was seldom the case, except with the unfortunate insane.

My father's health having been re-established, he resumed the duties of his situation, and the management of the house was carried on with regularity and mutual satisfaction betwixt my father and the governess, who was very kind and attentive to me. I continued in a weakly and a feeble state, and that was probably the reason why I was more indulged than I otherwise should have been, and certainly more than was conducive to my quick recovery. I was allowed to run about the place, almost when and where I chose, and I was not long in selecting a few especial playmates from amongst the pauper children. The big boys carried me on their backs; with the girls I played at ball, or at hide-and-seek, or the old-fashioned game of "Blackthorne;" and when a group of girls came around me as I sat to recover breath, the conversation would often be allusive to my mother, and then to parents generally, and next to such parents or relatives of the children as had died, or had deserted them, or were unknown. And thus we often chatted in our childish way until our young hearts got too full, and, forgetful of our play, we sat in tears. With these poor children I was an immense favourite; a kind of little brother to those who had none other in the world. Besides, I always divided amongst them any trifle or choice bit of delicacy which I happened to be pampered with at the time. Pip Brown, who was my big horse, thus got my toasted cheese; Bill Jordan, who ran races, and leaped furthest, had my buttered toast; little Nelly, whose father had been pressed and sent to sea, came in for my pie crust or my currant dumpling; whilst the pale and desolate-looking Alice, who was always alone, and who had not a relation in the world, was often cheered by my kind word, and was sure to get a share of my custard or my plum cake. The women also would confide to me some little message to Mrs. Rose when they wanted a trifling favour: the old men would get me to mention their being without clogs, or their want of a new doublet for the winter time, whilst if any punishment was to

be inflicted, any penance undergone, I was ever a pleader for the suffering party, and was often in some degree successful ; I perceived that neither my father nor Mrs. Rose were displeased with my interference ; and I had, consequently, friends in every part of the house. The old women would tell me strange stories of ghosts and hobgoblins ; the old men narrated shipwrecks and battles, or they would chant the song of the famous outlaw, how

“ He blew so loud and shrill ;  
Till a hundred and ten,  
Of Robin Hood’s men,  
Came tripping over the hill.”

And I was quite delighted with the idea of a free life in “ the merrie green-wood.”

Even amongst the lunatics, where I would sometimes prevail upon the keeper to let me accompany him, unknown to my father, I felt very little apprehension, and had several acquaintance. Some who were fierce and dangerous towards all others would permit me to approach them, and seemed pleased by my confidence. Others would be entirely mollified and disarmed of their frenzy by a trifling kindness, or a soothing word ; and for such as these I generally had secreted some little present, such as a pinch or two of snuff, a quid of tobacco ; or for the women some female ornament, with a word or two of hope and persuasion that they would soon return to their friends. Some were unmitigably mad, and untamed as wild beasts ; and from these I was kept at a proper distance. One who had been an extensive trader in Manchester, but was ruined by gross dissipation, was loathsome to behold, and frightful to hear ; whilst another, old Sally T., whose sons were then in business, and have since retired with princely fortunes, was invariably lamenting, and shedding tears ; she was beyond the reach of consolation in this world. But there was one who, having been once seen, was not soon to be forgotten. She was a young girl, an Irish girl I think, of perhaps seventeen years of age. Whilst her features were of the most beautiful outline, her person appeared

to be of faultless symmetry, and whilst her face and neck were pale without a streak, her hair, which hung over her bosom and shoulders, was black as jet; her head, and the upper part of her bust, were mostly bare; and at first glance, she looked like one who had come amongst us from some unknown sphere—so strange, so unearthly, so hopeless, so deathful, seemed the very life within her. Her features were immovable as the marble from which they seemed to have been chiselled. If pressed into a seat, she sat, if lifted to her feet, she stood, mute and motionless from sunrise to sunset would she have so remained if permitted. No tear fell from her eye, no sigh broke from her heart, no word escaped from her lips, save once, and that was “Edward!” the name of him who had betrayed and abandoned her. The poor thing lingered in this state some weeks, taking no food except when compelled to do so. All the natural functions were suspended, and at length the only indication of life which she had retained ceased also, and she no longer breathed.

Amongst the harmless lunatics who were suffered to go about the yards, was one who imagined himself to be the Duke of York. My father rather humoured his innocent whim, and he soon appeared in a cocked hat, and with various coloured stripes and shreds on his shoulders and across his breast, to the great amusement of the boys, whom he enlisted, and formed into a regiment to conquer the French; a business almost as feasible and wise as some of those in which the real Duke was at the same time engaged. Paddy Hamilton was another lunatic, who, though not so entirely harmless as “the Duke,” was allowed the run of the yards. The boys used to tease and irritate him, when he would sometimes turn upon and chase them, striking such as he caught unmercifully, and as they durst not complain, for fear of further punishment, my father was kept in ignorance of these proceedings. On one of these occasions, the boys had teased the poor young fellow until he seemed to have become all at once conscious of his wretched condition, and instead of throwing stones, or running after the children, he sat down on the edge of the stone pump trough and burst into tears. We were all sur-



prised to see him sitting so quiet—for I was one of the party—and on going near cautiously, we found him weeping bitterly, and exclaiming, “Why did you do this, boys?” “Oh, what did I do to you, that you thus ill-use me?” The other lads stood around, some laughing, some inclined to be sorry; but as for me, my heart smote me instantly; I felt that I had been committing a great wrong, and going up to the poor fellow, I took his hand, and cried with him for company, telling him we would never do so any more, inducing also the other boys to promise the same; and to make the peace lasting, and somewhat satisfactory to my own conscience, I went into the kitchen and asked for some bread and cheese, as if for myself, and coming out again I gave the whole to Paddy. Ever after that I was Paddy’s protector, and he was my devoted friend.

Such was the sort of life which I passed amongst these poor children and poor people. It is true I saw and heard some things of which it perhaps would not have been any disadvantage had I remained ignorant for the time. But my heart was never corrupted, never beguiled of its childish simplicity. Nor did any of these poor people, and I will do them the justice to state it, ever by word or deed, throw in my way an inducement that might lead to vice.

The great mass of the poor and unfortunate are not, in my opinion, so vicious as by the “well-to-do” multitude of the world they are supposed to be; and judging from what I have seen of them, from my childhood to the present time, which has not been a little, I should say they are more entitled to pity than condemnation. Some, we know, are thoroughly vicious and debased; but that the main body of them, struggling as they do, daily and hourly, with want on one hand and the allurements to vice on the other, still lean, nay, hold strongly, by “virtue’s side,” and cast from them temptations of which those who judge them severely know nothing, appears to me a truth so undeniable, that although my humble testimony may increase its acceptance, I cannot expect that it will add to its force.

I may, before closing this chapter, observe that the dietary



of the paupers, according to my best recollection, was water porridge and milk for breakfast, and sometimes drink porridge : boiled beef and vegetables, broth, hash, pea-soup, stew, and bread for dinner ; the dishes in succession, of course, or as convenience might require—the bread at dinner always. The suppers were water porridge and milk, or drink porridge, except on Sunday evenings, when each adult had a pint of good ale, with a slice round a loaf and a decent lump of cheese, served to them. The sick and very aged and infirm had bread and butter, or buttered toast, with tea or coffee, morning and evening ; their dinners were cut from the meat on the governor's table. The spade-men working in the grounds had bread and cheese and ale every afternoon, and the smokers and snuff-takers were each gratified every Friday with an allowance of their favourite luxury. Married couples did not live together ; they were separated ; they could not be otherwise, unless a separate apartment could have been found for each family, and that was out of all question. The men, therefore, lived in the men's ward, and the women in that of the women, taking with them infants at the breast, and perhaps one of the very youngest of the children, if they had a number. The men and their wives might see and converse with each other in the day time, especially when going to or returning from their meals in the public eating room ; it was not considered an offence to do so ; they were not, however, to remain conversing, but to depart to their respective wards, or avocations, when the other paupers did the same.

## CHAPTER VIII.

BAD HEALTH—WORSE DOCTORING—A TIMELY RETREAT—SCHOOL-MASTERS—THE FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

I CONTINUED in a very lingering condition, and my health having been consigned to the care of the worthy apothecary, who undertook my cure with the utmost confidence, he almost finished me by continual doses of a nauseous and sickly drug, called syrup of buckthorn, which the cheerful old gentleman, whom I almost began to hate, prevailed on me by coaxing or threats to gulp down every other morning. I scarcely need to say I got no better; the physic I took, such was my disgust towards it, would have made me ill had I been in health. I had a feeling of tightness or weight upon the chest, with a lowness and weariness of mind and body, which increased as it continued; I had also an ever-present wish to be at Middleton, an earnest longing to return to what I considered my true home, and to play once more with my earliest comrades. This longing, no doubt, had more to do with my illness than either my father or the apothecary had ever dreamt of; it was, in fact, the "home-sickness" which has carried multitudes to the grave. On one fine Sunday afternoon, as I well remember, my father took me to have a walk in the country. Our course was up Strangeways, and across Cheetwood to Cheetham Hill, where, with a relish I had not experienced for a long time, I partook of bottled porter and biscuit and butter. After having rested, my father would have returned through another part of Cheetwood, but learning that the highway we were upon led to Middleton, and that the

field-road to that place turned off a little further down, I prevailed on him to go past that spot, that I might once more behold the path that led to my Paradise on earth. We accordingly returned by the end of Smedley Lane, past the "Eagle and Child"—I hobbling as well as I could—and coming to Butter Stile, I prevailed on my father to go over it, and let me rest on the sweet green grass of those meadows, which to me appeared more brilliantly green than any I had seen during a long time. Here I luxuriated amongst the butter-cups and daisies, and the glent of a little peeping primrose or two cast a whole stream of sunny thoughts and pleasant feelings into that happy moment. The trees seemed to wave a broader and richer foliage; the air was balmy and refreshing; the sun itself was more life-fraught than when I felt it shining against the high walls and the flagged yards of the workhouse. Here, also, were birds the very same in appearance with those I had seen at Middleton; the bonny white wren, whose nest I so often found; the golden wagtail, and the lark too, singing just as he used to do during the field rambles of myself and play-mates. I was now in a happy mood, and I made known to my father how very agreeable this country walk was to me; how much better I already felt, and that I was sure I should soon be well if I might only go to Middleton for a short time. My indulgent parent listened with attention: he seemed struck for the first time, with an idea of one cause, at least, of my illness, and he promised that I should go to Middleton, as soon as he could make arrangements for my reception in the family of his sister, or that of his nephew. Blithely then did I rise from the grass, though sadly tired, and very weak. My father was not forgetful of what he had learned with respect to my illness, and the Saturday following I was committed to the care of Betty o' Booth, an old neighbour of ours who kept a shop at Middleton; she took me to the apple market, and stowed me away in a manner which, above all others, I should have chosen, namely, on a cart, amid hampers of apples, pears, and other fruit, which to me was not forbidden. By her I was safely delivered into the hands of my relatives, one of whom, a second mother, was more dear

to me than all the rest, and this was Sally Owen, who had become the wife of my cousin William, before we left Middleton.

I need not dwell longer on this passage of my life than to say that the habits of this family were strictly regular, my cousin was a Methodist of the old primitive earnest cast. Every morning a portion of Scripture was read, after which followed extempore prayer. Blessing was asked and thanks returned at every meal; and the day closed with another prayer. Other concerns were transacted with the same regularity which governed the devotions; and though the family was a rather large one, everything was carried on with the exactitude of clockwork, I alone being allowed some indulgence with respect to my incomings and outgoings, for as I had a home at Betty o' Booth's, as well as here, and only the brook divided them, there was less need of my keeping a strict attention to the meal times. But though I was happy myself, enjoying former scenes and associations with relish, I found I did not inspire others with the pleasure I hoped to have done. My "trindled shirt," which lay all white and nice with the collar and ruffles on my shoulders, was a cause of envy to one or two of my comrades. Neither did my speech, which during my twelve-months' absence had become a little polished, entirely meet with their approval. "Yerthe," I could hear them whispering to each other, "Yerthe, he ses yis, an' no." Some shyness was at first caused by my altered appearance and speech, but we soon became friends, and after a month of unrestricted freedom, and of continual action in the open air, with a diet at once simple and nourishing, I returned to Manchester with roses on my cheeks and quite restored to health.

I was now sent to school, and my first essay was with a master in Hanover Street, from whom I learned nothing, save a knowledge of the severe chastisement to which he subjected his unhappy scholars when they chanced to arouse his ungoverned anger. John Holt, who kept a school near to the Methodist Chapel, in Oldham Street, was my next tutor. He was a Methodist local preacher, and opened school every morning with singing and prayer; he was a person of low



stature and quick action, and wore a full-bottomed grey wig, and a "cock and pinch'd hat." I attended his instructions a considerable time, without much advancement, for, notwithstanding all he could do—and he was an industrious and ingenious teacher—I only got to spelling and reading words of one syllable; in fact, I must either have been very dull, or so taken up with play, with objects of mere feeling and impulse, that the faculty of thought and attention had remained inactive. After a time I was sent to the Free Grammar School, with the almost forlorn hope that at a place of such high repute something would be done, or would accidentally occur, to awaken my dormant faculties, if faculties at all for the acquirement of book knowledge I had. The house apothecary, who could assume a most polished address, undertook to introduce me to the respected master of the lower school, at this venerable and useful institution. All the rules and customs of such occasions the old gentleman would, of course, be careful to observe. He first, therefore, took me to a confectioner's shop in Smithy Door, where, having purchased a couple of pounds of the best gingerbread, he toddled, and I after him, across the churchyard and down Long Mill Gate, to the school; and having gained admittance, he respectfully presented me to the master, with a request, on behalf of my father, that he would be so kind as to afford me the benefit of his instruction. The master, receiving us courteously, asked what were my present requirements, also my name, age, and place of residence, which latter replies he entered in a book; and my conductor, depositing the gingerbread in a parcel on the table, together with a shilling, bowed and withdrew, leaving me abashed and confused amid the gaze and observation of the scholars, which I did not expect would be much in my favour, as I was weakly and ill-looking enough, and the more so from wearing a white linen cap, which tied under my chin. On a sign from the master a boy approached, and, taking me with one hand and the packet of gingerbread with the other, he led me to his class, which was that of the spellers, into which I was joyfully received. The boy who led me hither, and who was the head one of his class, now went

round and delivered to each boy of the class sitting in his place a cake of the gingerbread, and continued so doing until the whole I had brought was distributed. This was a very acceptable introduction to the boys; it was the invariable custom of the lower school, and was always productive of a friendly greeting towards the fresh comer; for my part, in five minutes I had a score or two of new acquaintance, asking questions, giving me information, and ready to lend me a helping hand in anything, especially so long as my gingerbread was sweet in their mouths. Such was my introduction to, and thus I became the lowest scholar in the lowest class of, the Free Grammar School.

My present instructor was a gentleman of probably thirty years of age, well-formed, above the middle height, with his powdered hair turned back from his free open countenance, and his face somewhat coloured by irruptions. His dress was such as became his station, that of a curate of the Church. His coat, vest, and breeches were of fine black cloth, the latter article of dress being held below the knee by a brace of small silver buckles, his stockings were dark grey speckled, his shoes were also fastened with silver buckles, and his cravat and linen were neatly adjusted, and very white. Thus did the Reverend John Gaskell appear on that well-remembered morning when he took me under his care; such was also his general mode of dress on other ordinary occasions. The school was a large room of an oblong form, extending north and south, and well lighted by large windows. At the northern end was a fireplace, with a red cheerful fire glowing in the grate. The master's custom was to sit in an armed chair, with his right towards the fire and his left arm resting on a square oaken table, on which lay a newspaper or two, a magazine or other publication, a couple of canes with the ends split, and a medley of boy's playthings, such as tops, whips, marbles, apple-scrapers, nut-crackers, dragon banding, and such like articles. The scholars were divided into six classes, namely, accidence, or introduction to Latin, higher Bible, middle Bible, lower Bible, Testament, and spelling classes: the accidence class sat opposite the master's face, and the

higher Bible one was at his back. Each class sat on a strong oaken bench, backed by a panel of the same, placed against the wall, with a narrow desk in front, so that all sat around the school in regular gradation. The spellers only had not a desk, they sat on forms outside the desk of the higher Bible class, they being considered as children amongst the boys. The boys of each class were placed according to their proficiency, and the first and second boys of the class exercised considerable authority over the others. The school hours were from seven to half-past eight at morning, from half-past nine to twelve at noon, and from two till five afternoon. The master was seldom more than five minutes beyond the time, and on coming in, he first pulled off his hat, and his extra coat or handkerchief, if he brought such; he would then probably give his hands a warming at the fire, stamp the wet from his shoes, and turning his back to the pleasant warmth, he would take a survey of the muster already arrived. Every boy who now entered the school was bound to go up to the table and present his shoulders for a correction, and they in general got off with a slight cut or two of the cane, except frequent defaulters, and those were hit more severely, being often sent to their class writhing, to the amusement of their more orderly comrades. The mustering and flogging being over, the classes were severally called up, arranged round the table, and went through their lessons, the boy who in spelling or reading could readiest make out a word when those above him were at fault, moving up to their places, and thus the quickest spellers and readers were always towards the upper end of their class. When a boy had been at the head of his class some time, and especially if he happened to have some acquaintance amongst those of the next class above him, and they wished to have him amongst them, their head boy would take him by the hand, and leading him to the master, would say, "If you please, sir, must — (mentioning the surname) go into my class?" when a brief intimation, as a nod, a "yes," or "no," would decide the application, and the parties withdrew either elated with success or abashed by failure. The boys of the accident class had a singular, I may say an anomalous, pri-



vilege at this school. Betwixt their lessons, and when, as one might suppose they should have been, studying their books for another lesson, they were allowed, two or three at a time, to perambulate round the school, in front of the other boys, when if they saw any one playing with a top or a ball, or other trifle, or showing one to a comrade, the privileged scholar would seize it and deposit it on the master's table ; or if the boy who had it were more than a match for the other, he would inform the master that so and so was at play with a top, or other thing, when the offender would be called up, compelled to lay down the toy, and would perhaps get a cut or two with the cane for his contumacy. These articles of plunder lay on the master's table until the school broke up, when, the moment the master put on his hat and stepped towards the door, the boys being previously all ready for a start, a rush was made from every corner of the school, a regular scramble ensued, and he who could fasten on a prize and keep it had it for his pains. Thursday and Saturday afternoons were play-times, and at Easter, Whitsuntide, and Christmas we had holidays of longer duration. Such were the customs of the lower department of the Free Grammar School, and the manner of conducting it at that time. What were the systems of the middle and upper schools—which were in other parts of the same building—I never knew, and consequently cannot describe. I may as well say, however, that it was understood amongst the scholars that the system of the lower school, with all its irregularities, was such as had prevailed a long time, and that our instructor was not at liberty to depart from it in any material degree.

At that time the Rev. Joshua Brookes \* lived at the house adjoining the school. He was not a very great favourite with the scholars, or with any one that I ever heard tell of, though, excepting a little uncontrollable irritability of temper, I never knew why he should not have been so. His father, however,

\* An eccentric but learned divine and chaplain of the " Old Church," in which capacity he is said to have baptised, married, and buried more persons than any other clergyman in the kingdom.



was still less esteemed than himself.\* He was a little old deformed cripple, with his features as crumpled and knitted as if he were a living alegar cruet. His up-cast face was a clear healthy brown, and on his head he wore a little old round hat, with a broad girdle and buckle in front of it. His knees were rigid, and his legs were doubled backward, so that when he stood upright he was on his knees; and in that posture, with a pair of short crutches under his arms, his knees protected by thick leathern sockets, and the toes of his buckled shoes by plates of brass, he used to hobble about the streets, dragging his feet after him. On fine sunny days he would often be sitting at his son's door, when woe to the boy at play who chanced unthinkingly to get within the reach of his crutch, especially if at any former time the youth had not treated him with that respect which he thought was his due.

My especial companions amid the varied crowd of these scholars were John Pilkington, son to the clerk at the old church; Jim Torkington, whose parents kept a hat shop in Church Street; Dick France, whose father kept the "Sir John Falstaff," in the Market Place; Henry Woodhouse, whose father kept the "Bull's Head"; and Dick Lyon, the occupation of whose father I have forgotten. Jim Torkington I respected because I had beaten him once and he did not get me flogged as he might have done. Henry Woodhouse was agreeable, being always willing to do as the others did. Dick Lyon, with his bold, honest face, would undertake anything, and stand by any cause that I did. He it was also who first got me advanced in the school by "asking" me from the spelling into the Testament class; and poor Dick France I was partial to because I thought he was rather severely treated, being flogged more than any other boy in the school, not because he was more vicious than other boys, but because he was more thoughtless and unlucky—inattentive, not having the power to be otherwise, and continually in scrapes for which others deserved the punishment. He was a fine, good-looking lad, however, as brave as he was thoughtless, and as kind-hearted

\* According to Mr. W. E. A. Axon ("Nat. Dic. Biog.") he went by the name of "Pontius Pilate."

as he was brave. Many and many were the rambles I took with this gang on our holiday afternoons. Cheetwood, Kersall, Crumpsall, and Broughton, were most frequently the scenes of our wanton frolics—our runnings, and leapings, and tumblings, and boxings. For in those hilarious outbreaks we were all life, laughter, and kindly joke. The sweet breath of the earth, coming up through the sod, we felt and inhaled, as we rolled over each other amongst the flowers: then the gusty wind blew our wild hair into each other's faces; when the sun broke we sung aloud; when the rain came we uncovered our dewy foreheads to cool them with the welcome drops. Then there was bird's-nesting to be done, and stick-cutting, and flower-culling, and earth-nut digging, and cress-gathering,—and when gnawing hunger came, as it did full soon, we sat down by the first clear rindle or dimpling spring that fell in our way, and each one pulling out his store of eatables, we fell to and feasted as joyously as if our fathers were the kings of those sweet solitudes.

Sometimes I and my companions would visit the "Giant's Castle" at Castle Field, after which we generally made the afternoon away by watching the boats on the Duke's Canal, or rambling around Hulme Hall, or on the dangerous brink of the Irwell, leaping like young kids. The remains of the ancient fortress at Castle Field embraced a level plot of ground almost of a circular form: the turf was quite smooth, and the grass where not trodden was very green. The centre of the plot was lower than the circuit, along which, here and there, might be seen grey stones and lumps of mortar. In one part of the area was a spot elevated above the rest, a small green mount, and around this also at intervals, foundations and ruins were seen jutting above the surface. But even these small remains of old Mancenion, hoary in tradition of untold years, are not now to be found.

Sometimes we would spend an hour or two in going through the College (the Old Baron's Hall), in playing in the pump-yard above the Irk, here all sadly metamorphosed and defiled; and in ever-recurring astonishment at the vast length and bulk which the fish must have been, which opened and shut—

awful idea—the huge jaw-bones which spanned the arch of the eastern gateway. Or we would climb the tower of the old church when the bells were ringing a peal, and the more daring would grasp a comrade's hand and stand upon the edge of the parapet, the steeple vibrating at the time almost like a stout oak in a breeze. This feat was done by more than one of our party; and in truth, if there were a place to which we ought not to have gone, or a feat we ought not to have attempted, to that place we were nearly sure to stray, and that exploit was almost certain to be tried.

And now, as is often the case, for the most important thing last, namely, my progress in learning at this celebrated school. When I entered the school, as already stated, I was one of the spelling class, and when the day for general promotion came at Christmas I was the first scholar in the first Bible-class, and consequently was the first English speller and reader in the school. I first discovered that I had made some progress in learning one Sunday morning at home, when conning, as usual, a chapter in the Testament, I unexpectedly found that I could read slowly verse after verse, almost without spelling a word. This was a joyful event to me; I read to my father when he came into the room; I read to the old apothecary, and the latter, patting me on the head, gave me a silver sixpence, and encouraged me to get on with my learning. I had some time before made myself master of the awful tale of "Brown, Jones, and Robinson," in the spelling-book, but then I had only got through it by the help of numerous spellings; whereas, now, being able to read, I had almost continually the Testament in my hand. I read all the wondrous accounts in the Revelation, and my father, not a little pleased, would at times sit down, and in his way explain the meaning of the strange things about which I read. After I had gone through the Revelation, I began with the Gospel of St. Matthew, and was deeply interested by the miracles, sufferings, and death of our Lord. The New Testament was now my story book, and I read it all through and through, but more for the interest the marvellous passages excited, than from any religious impression which they created. The gentle and benign character



of Christ filled me with admiration and awe : His sufferings excited my deepest sympathy, His persecutors my strongest hatred, and I only wished that Peter had chopped off one side of Judas's head, instead of merely cropping "the servant of the high priest's" ear.

And now a wider range was opened to my assiduous quest after the wonderful. At the corner of Hanging Bridge, near the Old Church yard, was a book shop kept by one Swindells, a printer. In the spacious windows of this shop, which is now "The Wedding-Ring" coffee-house, were exhibited numerous songs, ballads, tales, and other publications, with horrid and awful-looking woodcuts at the head ; which publications, with their cuts, had a strong command on my attention. Every farthing I could scrape together was now spent in purchasing histories of "Jack the Giant Killer," "Saint George and the Dragon," "Tom Hickathrift," "Jack and the Beanstalk," "The Seven Champions of Christendom," tale of "Fair Rosamond," "History of Friar Bacon," "Account of the Lancashire Witches," "The Witches of the Woodlands," and such like romances, whilst my metrical collections embraced but few pieces besides "Robin Hood's Songs" and "The Ballad of Chevy Chase." Of all these tales and ballads I was soon master, and they formed the subjects of many a long study to me, and of many a wonder-creating story for my acquaintance both at the workhouse and elsewhere. For my part I implicitly believed them all, and when told by my father or others that they were "trash" and "nonsense," and "could not be true," I, innocently enough, contrasted their probability with that of other wondrous things which I had read in books that "it were a sin to disbelieve." So I continued reading, and doubting nothing which I read, until many years after, when a more extended acquaintance with men and books taught me how better to discriminate betwixt reason and unreason, truth and falsehood. When I first plunged, as it were, into the blessed habit of reading, faculties which had hitherto given but small intimation of existence, suddenly sprung into vigorous action. My mind was ever desiring more of the silent but exciting conversation with books, and of whatever was



conveyed to it from that source, small was the portion that did not remain. My attention was quick, and my memory was very retentive of what I read.

Whilst I thus made myself acquainted with the New Testament, the Bible, and all the other books that fell in my way, the day had come round when, previous to the Christmas holidays, a general promotion took place of such scholars as were qualified for higher classes, and I being the first boy in the first English class, should have been promoted to the "accidence." But, alas! when called upon I could only inform the master, with blushes on my cheeks and tears in my eyes, that my father did not wish me to go into the Latin class at present, but desired that I might remain in the class to which I then belonged. My master, I can recollect, looked at me incredulously; studied, questioned me again, and, with an expression of disappointment, motioned that I should return to my place. This was a sore humiliation to me. My comrades Pilkington, Woodhouse, and others, passed over to the Latin side, whilst I remained in a class lower than theirs, and consequently stood in a situation inferior to that of those whom I had been in the habit of leading. Henceforward I thought meanly of my position, and never glanced at my former comrades without a feeling which lowered the zest of my future school-life.

This as it regarded my welfare was probably the most momentous and ill-advised step which my father could have determined upon. Had the threshold of the classics been once crossed by me, great must have been the difficulties indeed which would have prevented me from making the whole of that ancient lore my own. I was just at the right age, and in the right frame of mind, with faculties as it were newly come to life, and with an instructor who I have since had many reasons for supposing would have done all he could towards helping me forward into the upper schools; and, had I once got fairly introduced to the learning of the ancients I should not have stopped short on this side of the university I think. But my father had more humble views, founded on serious and conscientious reasons I have no doubt. He said

Latin should be learned by such only as were intended to become doctors, or lawyers, or parsons ; and as I should never be any of these, the time spent in learning it would only be thrown away. A knowledge of English grammar, he said, was worth more than Greek or Latin to an Englishman, and he wondered why, in the name of goodness, English grammar was not taught at this English grammar school ; and so he concluded he would not buy me an “accidence.” Such were the homely views and the determination resulting from them, which kept me at my English rudiments another year, and thrust me from that portal of knowledge which I never afterwards had an opportunity of approaching. Had my mother been living, such would probably not have been the case, and a course of life, far different from the one I have pursued, would have been marked out before me.

## CHAPTER IX.

### ANOTHER GREAT CHANGE.

MEANTIME Mr. Rose, the schoolmaster at the workhouse, died, and his place was filled by a Mr. Pickering, who, like his predecessor, had been in business and failed. Mr. Pickering was about fifty years of age, a quick and rather haughty kind of man, who endeavoured to maintain a remnant of the authoritative manner of his former state, though it was greatly out of place in the situation he then occupied. My father, I recollect, was under the necessity of setting him right once or twice, after which, as he came round to understand his position better, he was not an unpleasant associate. His wife had died some time before, leaving him two children, a son and a daughter, to provide for. The latter, who was a sweet-looking, affectionate young woman, probably from sixteen to eighteen years of age, lived in the family of a Mr. Richardson, who kept a large glass and china shop at the top of Smithy Door: and the son, Samuel, who was a fine lad about my own age, and had a great resemblance of his sister, came to live with his father at the workhouse. Sam and I were, of course, inseparable companions; we ate together, and when not at school, played together from morning to night. He was as great a blockhead in books as I had ever been, and in our walks outside the gates, which were not unfrequent, I read to him my twopenny histories, and narrated all my stories, until he was as great an enthusiast as myself. At length, "Robinson Crusoe," that ever exciting day-dream of boys, fell in our way. I read it to him, as I had done the others, and for a long time both Sam's ideas and mine were awed and fascinated by the

descriptions of sea-dangers, shipwrecks, and lone islands with savages, and far-off countries teeming with riches and plenty. In a field close to the gates was a large and deep reservoir of water which accumulated from a small rindle which came through the wood I have before mentioned, and supplied the extensive brewery below, which afterwards belonged to Messrs. Fray, Hole, and Potter. In one part of this reservoir was a small island covered with willows and other shrubs, and Sam and I had often explored this island when the water was sufficiently low for us to wade it—our reward being sometimes a couple or so of duck-eggs. We had also taken a goodly number of fish, chiefly perch and bream, with which we stored a circular pond in the garden of the workhouse. Now, however, we assumed other characters than those of mere idling school-boys: we were henceforth “Robinson Crusoe,” and his “Man Friday.” The cock-clod was our “desert island”; the brush-wood was our means of concealment; the duck-eggs and the fish were as much our lawful right as was anything which Crusoe possessed in his place of solitude; we had “savages” also, whose “footprints” made us pause and look around; those savages being the men from the brewery, who sometimes discovering us when they came up to let off the water, gave us chase and made us carry our heels quickly towards the wood. Nor were we without our perils and “shipwrecks”; for getting some old planks and a split board or two, we made a raft, on which, whenever we found it necessary to “go on a voyage,” we paddled the length or breadth of this our “ocean,” often getting ashore, only just at the time when our timbers were dispersing, and our craft was “a total wreck.” Poor Sam! I had a great affection for him. I sometimes went with him to see his sister; and I could perceive that she was not at ease, for her employer looked very crusty when he found her otherways employed than in dusting glasses or arranging china. Both Sam and his sister often shed tears at parting after their brief interviews. He stopped not long at the workhouse; his father, I think, sickened and died there. But however it was, Sam went to sea, and in a voyage or two news came that he was lost. I was years and could not



believe that he was dead. I had a notion that he had been sold to slavery in some foreign land, and would certainly return. But poor Sam never came back again ; he was lost sure enough.

It must have been about this time that I was taken to see that unfortunate youth, George Russel, pass through Manchester, on his way to the place of execution at Newton Heath. The impression left by that sad spectacle will never be eradicated from my mind, unless reason fail.\*

My father, judging it expedient, as I suppose, to enter again into the married state, took to wife a widow with four children, who earned a frugal livelihood by doing needlework for saddlers. Her children were three sons and one daughter, and the oldest son was at sea in the African slave trade. After this event, the business of the workhouse was conducted in a less agreeable manner than it had heretofore been betwixt my father and the governess. It is only reasonable to suppose that my father had been induced to take this decided step by the persuasion that his wife would fill the situation held by Mrs. Rose ; he probably had some grounds for a supposition of that kind ; promises and pledges to that effect were probably given by the parish officers, or some influential portion of them, but however that might be, disagreements betwixt my father and the governess became of almost daily occurrence. Crimination and recrimination followed ; the parish officers became partizans in the dispute ; we children were sent away—my sister to a friend in town, and I and my brother to our relations at Middleton. From that time I never resided with my father, and soon after both he and Mrs. Rose were discharged from their situations.

My father had lost a wife, a brother, two children, and nearly his own life and that of a third child, in the service of the township of Manchester ; and though, as I have good reasons for supposing, no valid impeachment was made against either his capacity or his integrity, he got nothing by way of "indemnity," when a party in the town's office thought fit to dispense with his services. There was no "retiring pension"

\* See "Passages in the Life of a Radical."

for him; no "compensation" for his irreparable losses. If this was scarcely just towards himself, as an individual, it was still less so towards his children who were turned into the world, "shorn to the quick"; fatherless now, as well as motherless; for in most essential matters he was no longer a guardian to them. Two of the three never afterwards had a home under the same roof with him.

It was a cold winter's afternoon when my brother and I, with our bundles under our arms, took our way up Red Bank on the road to Middleton. We had been instructed to keep on the high road, for there had been a heavy fall of snow followed by a strong wind, and the snow was now drifting in clouds. Over Cheetham Hill we hobbled along, knocking the thick snow-clogs from our shoes, our hands thrust into our pockets, and our jackets buttoned up to the chin. Coming to the summit of Bowker Bank, where the wind swept fast and cold, I asked my brother why he kept wiping his eyes? He said it was only the snow he was wiping off, but I knew better, and though not exactly in a joyous mood myself, I endeavoured to rally him out of his gloomy bodings of the future.

It was towards the close of the day when we arrived at the house of my uncle William, which was in High Street in the town mentioned. We presented a letter from my father, and were received with kindness by the worthy couple, whilst their three children looked on us with a bashful and pleased reserve. We joined the circle at their homely meal, and my uncle and aunt not having convenience for lodging us, we were accommodated temporarily at the house of another relative.

The row of houses in which my uncle lived faced the morning sun; a neatly paved footpath, and a causey for carts, lay in front of the houses from one end of the row to the other; and separated from the houses by the causey and footpath was a large green, used as a playground. My uncle's domicile, like all the others, consisted of one principal room called "the house"; on the same floor with this was a loom-shop capable of containing four looms, and in the rear of the house on the same floor, were a small kitchen and a buttery. Over the house and loom-shop were chambers; and over the kitchen

and buttery was another small apartment, and a flight of stairs. The whole of the rooms were lighted by windows of small square panes, framed in lead, in good condition ; those in the front being protected by shutters. The interior of this dwelling showed that cleanly and comfortable appearance which is always to be seen where a managing Englishwoman is present. There were a dozen good rush-bottomed chairs, the backs and rails bright with wax and rubbing ; a handsome clock in mahogany case ; a good chest of oaken drawers ; a mahogany snap-table ; a mahogany corner cupboard, all well polished ; besides tables, weather-glass, cornice, and ornaments ; pictures illustrative of Joseph and his Brethren, and various other articles indicative of a regard for convenience as well as ornament. And though last enumerated, not the least to be regarded by a hungry youth of my age, was a large bread-flake well stored with oaten cakes.

My uncle's family consisted of himself, my aunt (Elizabeth), their son Thomas, and their two daughters Hannah and Dolly. Thomas was a rather thoughtful and clever lad, a year or two older than myself ; Hannah was a neat, good-looking girl of my own age ; and Dolly was a fair, delicate, and sadly spoiled child. My aunt, that sister of my father whom I have before mentioned, was rather tall for a woman ; dark complexioned, middle aged, somewhat corpulent, fresh coloured, intelligent looking, and with an arch and penetrating manner of conversation. She took snuff, wore a mob-cap, a bed-gown, a stiff pair of stays which stood out at the bosom, a warm woollen petticoat, white knitted hose, and shoes with patten clogs to keep her feet warm. She was asthmatical, and consequently often in delicate health, but as her chief employment was to sit at the wheel winding bobbins for the weavers, her complaint was less embarrassing than it would have been had she been necessitated to do the heavy drudgery of the house, much of which her daughter Hannah performed. My uncle was of the middle height, rather corpulent, about fifty years of age, good looking, a quiet, sententious, equable tempered man, who took his work, his meals, his pipe, and his repose regularly, and seldom troubled himself about affairs out of his own house. Not but

he had opinions and wishes, both religious and political, and they were all on the right liberal side, but he did not make a parade of them. He was both in theory and practice a Christian patriot of the old, simple, unpretending class, who not being gifted with a multiplicity of words, gave lessons to his family by example. His mind was, I believe, as intentionless of wilful offence as that of an infant; but he possessed a sturdy resistance to wrong or menace, which would have verily held him to be martyred sooner than give way. This worthy couple were Methodists of the old John Wesley caste, which prevailed in those days; their children were brought up in the same religious tenets, and with this family of humble but respectable condition my lot was cast thus once more in the place of my birth.



## CHAPTER X.

### A NEW LIFE.

My brother was now set down to the loom at once, whilst my employment was to fetch milk every morning, to run to the well for water when wanted, to go errands generally, and to assist my aunt at times in the bobbin-winding department—all of which suited my disposition and habits most pleasingly, except the latter piece of bondage, which on account of its monotonous confinement soon became abhorrent to my feelings; and had not my frequent escapades in the way of errand running allowed me many sweet snatches of freedom my situation would have been far from happy.

In the performance of my task of fetching home the milk every morning I soon became acquainted with several children of my own age who attended the same place on the same errand. During my loitering perambulations to and from Hollin Lane, where the milk-house was, I had sometimes the attendance of two or three such companions, who caught every word I spoke, as I described the strange things to be seen at Manchester, and the still more wondrous ones of which I had read, and which accounts I was quite sure were true. But soon my most constant attendant on these occasions was a little smiling, rosy-cheeked child, who was almost certain to be found standing alone by the highway side, or loitering slowly until I appeared. I took not any particular notice of the girl; I was a tall, straight, pale-looking boy, whilst she appeared to me nothing more than a kind of little human cherry-bud, who was always the first to join my company, and the last to leave it.

At the milk-house we often found an assemblage of a dozen married women, two or three young ones, an old man or two, and some half-score or so of children, all come on the like errand as ourselves, and waiting until the milk arrived. Meantime there would be some snatches of scandal turned over—sly insinuations respecting “this body’s character” and “that body’s conduct.” Some would treat themselves and neighbours to snuff; others would take a whiff or so of tobacco, “just to keep the wind off,” whilst the woman of the house, “Owd Beet wife,” sat croning at her wheel, and her daughter, a flashy lass, was on her loom weaving napkins, and singing love ditties like a nightingale. When the milk arrived, all the persons waiting surrounded it, and there was much pressing and entreating to be served early by those who were impatient; at such times I was often useful to my little cherry-bud, and my other youthful companions, in making a way for them through the crowd, and when they had got served with milk they would retire, and wait until I joined them; and then we all returned together, interchanging our childish observations as before. But the little cherry-bud was nearly always on the road with me, going and coming, whilst I had the company of the others only incidentally.

Her name was Jemima, but I knew her only by that of Mima, and by that alone shall I distinguish her. Like myself she lived with an uncle and aunt, who had taken charge of her when only an infant. What I was virtually also, she was in reality, an orphan, and when I became aware of her condition in that respect, I felt a greater interest in whatever concerned her—I was more desirous of pleasing her, and of rendering her any little service which lay in my power. Nor was she indifferent to anything which affected me; when in moments of sadness I sometimes reverted to my mother’s well-remembered fondness, or the kindness of my uncle Thomas, or to my father’s tender regard, whose absence I deeply felt, and whom I now seldom saw, she, who had never known either father or mother, would often be moved until her full heart overflowed from her eyes. She became a very agreeable and always welcome companion on the road—a child to whom, because

she had no parents, I felt bound to be kind, but nothing more.

The mode of living at my uncle's was of the simplest country style. At breakfast, a brown earthen dish being placed on a low beaufet\* near the middle of the floor, a boiling of water porridge was poured into the dish, hot from the pan. A mess-pot of the same material as the dish was placed for each one about to partake of the breakfast, a quantity of milk and a spoon were placed in each pot, my uncle took a seat and asked a blessing, each of the children of the family standing around; we then took our several messes of milk, and helped ourselves to the steaming porridge as quickly as we chose, and mixing and eating in the manner we liked best, not a word being spoken all the time. The porridge being scraped up, which they† in general were rather quickly, each would take a piece of hard oaten cake and eat it to the remainder of his milk, after which a little butter, or a small piece of cheese, with more oaten bread, would finish the meal, and in a few minutes work was resumed. My aunt would shortly after make her appearance, her face red, and herself distressed with coughing; the kettle would then be set on for her, and when the asthmatic paroxysm had sufficiently abated she took her breakfast and sat down to her wheel. Our dinners consisted generally of butcher's meat and potatoes, or potato-pie, or meat and broth, or barm dumplings, or drink porridge, or hasty pudding, and in each case the food was partaken in the same primitive manner. When we had meat and potatoes each had an allowance of the meat on a piece of oat-cake, and the potatoes being poured into a dish placed on the beaufet as before, we all stood round, and with spoon or knife, as we chose, ate from the dish so long as the potatoes lasted, after which we stole out to play, eating our remnant of butcher's meat and cake the while. There was not a word heard until we got out of doors, and then we were as noisy as others. When we had potato-pie for dinner an allowance of the crust was given to each; the potatoes

\* A low three-legged stool, called in the north buffet-stool.

† Porridge used to be described in the plural number.

were then eaten out of the dish as before, and the crust, as being the most dainty, was eaten afterwards. When we had broth each received a mess for himself, to which he added as much oaten cake as he chose; the potatoes were eaten out of the dish, and the meat being served in portions, each ate it with cake at his leisure. When we had dumplings they were set on the beaufet in the same brown dish, or one of the sort; a little dip was made from the water the dumplings had been boiled in, a lump of butter and a little sugar or treacle being added; the dip was then poured upon the dumplings, and we fell to and ate as we liked, the only restriction being that there was not to be any talking at meat. How different was this sententious and becoming manner at table from the one which now prevails around fashionable boards, where, if a person cannot, or will not, both gabble and gobble at the same time, he is looked upon as vulgar, and where the highest test of good breeding is to keep both chin and tongue—the latter especially—in motion, it matters not on what subject if it only elicit not a thought. Such is one of the puerilities by which insane pride seeks to be distinguished from the thoughtful and earnest portion of society. Our bagging, or afternoon lunch, consisted of half an oaten cake, with butter, treacle, cheese, or milk, as circumstances rendered most convenient, and our supper was generally the same as breakfast. On Sunday mornings we had mint or balm tea, sweetened with treacle, and oaten cake and butter; on Sunday afternoons we had tea of the same kind, and a slice of buttered loaf was added, which was an especial dainty.



## CHAPTER XI.

### SCHOOLING—CORRECTION—PRAYER.

At this time the Methodists of Middleton kept a Sunday school in their chapel at Bottom of Barrowfields, and this school we young folks all attended. I was probably a far better speller and reader than any teacher in the place, and I had not gone there very long when I was set to writing. I soon mastered the rudimental lines, and quitting "pot-hooks and ladles," as they were called, I commenced writing "large-hand." For the real old Arminian Methodists, the immediate descendants of the Wesleys, the Nelsons, and the Taylors, thought it no desecration of the Sabbath to enable the rising generation on that day to write the Word of God as well as to read it. Had the views and very commendable practice of these old fathers been continued in Sunday schools generally, the reproach would not have been cast upon our labouring population, as it was on the publication of the census of 1841, that a greater proportion of the working classes of Lancashire were unable to write their names than were to be found in several counties less favoured by means of instruction. The modern Methodists may boast of this feat as their especial work. The Church party never undertook to instruct in writing on Sundays; the old Arminian Wesleyans did undertake it, and succeeded wonderfully, but the Conferential Methodists put a stop to it; other religious bodies, if I am not mistaken, did the same, and in 1841 it was a matter of surprise to many that our working population was behind that of other counties in the capability of writing names. Let the honour of this stoppage be assumed by those who have earned it, by the "ministers of

religion," so called, generally, and by those of the Conferential Methodists especially.

Every Sunday morning at half-past eight o'clock was this old Methodists school open for the instruction of whatever child crossed its threshold. A hymn was first led out and sung by the scholars and teachers. An extempore prayer followed, all the scholars and teachers kneeling at their places; the classes, ranging from those of the spelling-book to those of the Bible, then commenced their lessons, girls in the gallery above, and boys below. Desks which could either be moved up or down, like the leaf of a table, were arranged all round the school, against the walls of the gallery, as well as against those below, and at measured distances the walls were numbered. Whilst the Bible and Testament classes were reading their first lesson the desks were got ready, inkstands and copy-books numbered, containing copies and pens, were placed opposite corresponding numbers on the wall; and when the lesson was concluded the writers took their places, each at his own number, and so continued their instruction. When the copy was finished, the book was shut and left on the desk, a lesson of spelling was gone through, and at twelve o'clock singing and prayer again took place, and the scholars were dismissed. At one o'clock there was service in the chapel, and soon after two the school reassembled, girls now occupying the writing desks, as boys had done in the forenoon, and at four or half-past the scholars were sent home for the week.

My readers will expect hearing that the school was well attended, and it was so, not only by children and youths of the immediate neighbourhood, but by young men and women from distant localities. Big collier lads and their sisters from Siddal Moor were regular in their attendance. From the borders of Whittle, from Bowlee, from the White Moss, from Jumbo, and Chadderton, and Thornham, came groups of boys and girls with their substantial dinners tied in clean napkins, and the little chapel was so crowded that when the teachers moved they had to wade, as it were, through the close-ranked youngsters.

My father having been appointed to the situation of governor

of the workhouse of Salford, with his wife as governess, I was placed as a half-day scholar under the tuition of the Rev. James Archer, at the Middleton Free Grammar School. I soon began to improve in writing. This indulgence of schooling lasted, however, only during a very brief space, for my aunt, in consequence of her own ill-health, becoming more and more exacting in the hateful drudgery of the bobbin-wheel, I was not able to perform my allotted task in time for school attendance, which, therefore, soon became irregular, and was next discontinued.

As before intimated, my connection with this school was brief, and then, with the exception of Bible lessons at the Sunday school, all my reading was done at home, after the daily task was finished. When not strongly tempted to play I was almost certain to be reading by the summer's twilight, or by the red embers of the winter's fire, my books being chiefly "Wesley's Journals," and "The Arminian Magazine," wherein I found "Maundrell's Travels from Aleppo to Jerusalem," which I was very much interested by; "An Account of the Inquisition in Spain," which filled me with a dislike of Popery; "The Drummer of Tedworth;" "Some Account of the Disturbances at Glenluce;" "An Account of the Apparition of the Laird of Cool"—and other most marvellous narratives, which excited my attention, and held me poring over the ashes until the light was either gone or I was sent to bed. I also got hold of an old superstitious doctoring book, which gave me some unexpected information relative to the human frame, and equally surprised me as to the occult powers of certain herbs and simples, when prepared under supposed planetary aspects. A copy of Cocker's Arithmetic soon after set me to writing figures and casting accounts, in which I made but slow progress; and part of a small volume of "The History of England," which I found in rummaging an old meal ark, gave me the first insight into the chronicles of my native country.

Whilst my life at the bobbin-wheel was wretched on account of the confinement, my poor old aunt had generally a sad time with me. It was scarcely to be expected that a tall, straight, round-limbed young ruffian like myself, with bare legs and

feet, bare neck, and a head equally denuded, save by a crop of thick coarse hair, should sit day by day twirling a wheel and guiding a thread; his long limbs cramped and doubled under a low wooden stool. For I may observe that the clothes with which I left Manchester having been worn out, I went in the week-days of summer time never hosed, and but scantily draped, except Sundays, when a decent suit was at my service. I accordingly at times, from a sheer inability to sit still, played all kind of pranks, and threw myself into all kinds of attitudes, keeping my wheel going the while, lest my aunt should have it to say I was playing and neglecting my task. I generally sat near her at work, and I must confess that I sometimes exhibited these antics from a wish to provoke rather than amuse my observant and somewhat irritable overseer. On these occasions I frequently got a rap on the head from a weaver's rod which my aunt would have beside her, whereupon I would move out of her reach and continue "marlockin" until I got either more correction, or was despatched on an errand, or banished into the "loom-house" amongst the weavers. Then, when my uncle went into the house to smoke his pipe, which he generally did in the forenoon and afternoon, my aunt half diverted, half provoked, would give him the history of my pranks and my "flitting," as she would call it, when he would laugh until tears filled his eyes, or his pipe snapped in twain—for he used to sit quite at his ease, with the tube pendant from his mouth—and on his returning to his loom, he would admonish me sharply, or more commonly would question me as to the cause of the rupture—pretending not to know about it,—and would conclude by advising me to be submissive to my aunt, and by all means to keep on good terms with the mistress of the house wherever I dwelt. I was certainly so good tempered and cheerful they scarcely could be long displeased with me for all my faults, and so these little darkenings passed like cloud spots, and presently all was bright again. The most serious rupture which I had with my aunt was occasioned by an act of wilful disobedience on my part. She dealt out to me a certain number of hanks and cops which I was to have wound by "bagging-time," in the afternoon, or



beaten I certainly should be. I sat at my wheel and made not any reply, determining not to wind them, as I thought the task unreasonable, and that she was, in this instance, acting arbitrarily. I continued, therefore, to turn the wheel very deliberately, indeed, rather carelessly, until the time appointed had expired, when my aunt, laying hold of a stout rod, began to lay it upon my back and across my shoulders, which she did until she was spent for breath, I but little flinching all the time; she seemed rather puzzled by my coolness, whilst I was equally diverted by her embarrassment; at length, being quite exhausted, she stood looking at me with an air of vexation, and suddenly began to hit me on the legs, which set me a capering, and made me run out of the house, and remain away until the storm was blown over. With a determination to incur the beating, and a knowledge that I should have it, I had got two thin boards, part of an orange box, which I put under my waistcoat, so as to cover each shoulder blade, and buttoning waistcoat and jacket over them, I was well encased against my poor aunt's weak blows, so long as they were applied to the defended parts. My comical expedient caused more suppressed laughter in the family than anger; and when I returned into the house again, looking rather dolorous of course, I could perceive that my aunt had got quite enough of the beating as well as myself, whilst my uncle at his next smoking bout,—I being banished as usual into the loom-shop, where I could see but not hear him,—sat and laughed until his corpulent frame shook as if he would have fallen out of his chair, and then he came to his work without reprimanding me.

About this time I had a sincere desire to become religious; and I earnestly prayed, in my way, that God would awaken me to a strong sense of my "sinful and lost state," and would make me cry out as in agony for my "manifold transgressions"—amongst which losing my Bible once, when I went a bee-hunting instead of coming home from school, covert disobedience to my uncle and aunt, and carelessness after prayer, were to me the most prominent. I wished, like Saul, to be convinced and converted whether or not; to be "arrested in

my career " by an irresistible arm, for I felt almost certain that if I never forsook sin until I did so voluntarily, and from my very heart, there was great danger of my never doing so. I was as sincere, however, as I could be—as I well knew how to be, and often I expected to have "a call," like my name-sake of old, when I would reply, "Lord! Thy servant heareth." But there was no call for me; my obdurate heart remained "unbroken by the hammer of the word," and somehow it happened that my longest and most fervent prayers were made on my visits to the little chamber upstairs, when instead of being on my knees, I ought to have been looking out cops and hanks to wind for my weavers. Thus it was, I would have either sung, or prayed, or I believe, I should have done any other thing, sinful or devout, that would have kept me from the hated wheel. I came to the conclusion that God never did nor ever would take the trouble to convince one of my condition, and that there was no religion in the world that could ever make a bobbin-winder content with his lot;—and so ended, at that time, my efforts for obtaining grace.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A HOME-BEARING, A DINNER, AND A MASTER INDEED.

As I was getting rather too unmanageable for my aunt at the bobbin-wheel, fortunately in this respect for both her and myself, my brother went to reside at Manchester, and a vacancy thus occurring on one of the looms, I was transferred to it, and became a weaver. At the Sunday school also I was promoted from being a scholar to a ruler of copybooks, a cutter of pens, and an attendant generally on the writers ; one of whom being Mima, " the little cherry-bud," I took care she should always have a clean copy and a new pen. She had become a frequent visitor at our house, and a close companion to my cousin Hannah, who for some time had slept with her at her uncle's.

Having now become an active lad, and, from my good temper and willingness to perform any service, now that the abhorrent wheel was not in the way, had made some advances into the kindly feelings of my aunt and uncle, I was at times chosen to assist the latter when he took the work home to Manchester. The family were, at that time, chiefly employed by Messrs. Samuel and James Broadbent, of Cannon Street, and as the work was for the most part " pollicat" and " romoll" handkerchiefs, with a finer reed, occasionally, of silk and cotton " garments," or handkerchiefs, the " bearing-home wallet" was often both bulky and heavy ; and when it happened to be too much so for one person to carry, a neighbour's wallet would be borrowed, the burden divided into two, and I would go with one part over my shoulder, behind or before my uncle. He being, as already stated, rather heavy in person would walk deliberately, with a stick in his hand, his

green woollen apron twisted round his waist, his clean shirt showing at the open breast of his waistcoat, his brown silk handkerchief wrapped round his neck, a quid of tobacco in his mouth, and a broad and rather slouched hat on his head. So would he appear when setting out on a "bearing-home" journey; whilst I, with my smaller wallet, with my rough jacket, my knee breeches, my strong stockings and shoes, my open collared shirt, and pleasure and glee in my heart and countenance, footed the way as lightsomely as a young colt.

The warehouse of Messrs. Broadbent was nearly at the top of Cannon Street, on the right-hand side. We mounted some steps, went along a covered passage, and up a height or two of stairs, to a landing place, one side of which was railed off by the bannister, and the other furnished with a seat for weavers to rest upon when they arrived. Here we should probably find some half-dozen weavers and winders, waiting for their turn to deliver in their work and to receive fresh material; and the business betwixt workman and putter-out was generally done in an amicable, reasonable way. No captious fault-finding, no bullying, no arbitrary abatement, which have been too common since, were then practised. If the work were really faulty, the weaver was shown the fault, and if it were not a serious one he was only cautioned against repeating it; if the length or the weight was not what it should be, he was told of it, and would be expected to set it right, or account for it, at his next bearing-home, and if he were a frequent defaulter he was no longer employed. But very rarely indeed did it happen that any transaction bearing the appearance of an advantage being taken against the workman by the putter-out was heard of in those days.

It would sometimes happen that warp or weft would not be ready until after dinner, and on such occasions, my uncle having left his wallet in care of the putter-out, would go downstairs and get paid at the counting-house, and from thence go to the public-house where we lunched on bread and cheese, or cold meat and bread, with ale, to which my uncle added his ever-favourite pipe of tobacco. This house, which was the "Hope and Anchor," in the old churchyard, was also



frequented by other weavers; the putter-out at Broadbents generally dined there in the parlour, and when he had dined he would come and take a glass of ale, smoke his pipe, and chat with the weavers, after which, my uncle would again go to the warehouse, and getting what material he wanted, would buy a few groceries and tobacco in the town, or probably, as we returned through the apple market, to go down Long Mill Gate, he would purchase a peck of apples, and giving them to me to carry, we wended towards home, I, by permission, making pretty free with the apples by the way. Before leaving the town my uncle would probably call at the "Queen Anne," in Long Mill Gate, to see if there were any suitable company going our way; if there were, we took a glass until all were ready, and then we walked on together. Another calling house was Schofield's, at Scotland Bridge, and the last in the town was the "Flower Pot," on Red Bank. In winter time, and especially when day was closing, the weavers preferred thus returning in groups, for the road was not altogether free of foot-pads any more than at present. In hot summer weather, the weavers would sometimes indulge themselves by a ride in a cart, or they would leave their heavy burdens at the "Three Crowns," in Cock Gates, to be forwarded by Abraham Lees, the Middleton carrier. When a party of weavers returned in company, they would generally make a halt at Blackley, either at the "White Lion," or at Travis's, the "Golden Lion," over the way. There the wallets, or "pokes" as they were mostly called, were piled in a heap, ale was ordered, seats drawn round the fire, pipes were soon lighted, news interchanged with the host or some of his company; half an hour, or sometimes more, was thus spent, when the shot being called and paid, the travellers took their wallets and climbing the Hill lane, were soon at home. Such was "a bearing-home day" to Manchester in those times.

But even those days, advantageous as they certainly were when compared with the present ones which are devoted to a similar errand, were considered as being greatly altered for the worse since the days which could be spoken of from remembrance. The two classes of workmen and employer

were already at too great a distance from each other, and it was a subject of observation that the masters were becoming more and more proud and uplifted each day. Some had seen the time when, on taking their work home, and material not being ready, a dialogue like the following would take place.

Master.—Well, William, there will be no piece for thee till afternoon.

Weaver.—Very well, I'll wait for it then; wot time munni come, think'n yo?

Master.—Why, it's nearly dinner time now, and if thou'll go an' have a bit o' dinner wi' me, th' work will, mayhap, be ready when we come back.

Weaver.—Thank yo, mester, I'll goo wi' yo then.

So master and man would walk together to some decent-looking house, in some decent, quiet street, where the master, his wife, his children, and the guest, would sit down to a plain, substantial dinner of broth most likely, with dumpling and meat, or roast beef and baked pudding, or a steaming potato-pie; after which, master and workman would sit with their ale and pipes, talking about whatever most concerned themselves; and it were no undue stretch of imagination to suppose that a conversation somewhat like the following would take place—the lady of the house also being present with her knitting.

Master.—Well, William, an' how are you going on at your side o' th' country?

Weaver.—Pratty weel, mester, only they're begun a screwin op rents, and ar reyther niblin' at wages.

Master.—Aye; who's screwin' up rents?

Weaver.—Yon new felley ats comn to th' Hoe ses he mun ha' three shillin' a acre moor fro his Middlet'n tennants th' next hawve yer.

Master.—That's a bad beginnin'; but I always thought yon Norfolk landlord would alter th' strip of old Sir Raphe's cloth. An' what do the tenants say about that?

Weaver.—Wot con the say? they're ill enoof obeawt it yomay besure. They grumbln confoundedly, an' sen iv Lady Mary had nobbut wed Sir Asht'n isted o' yon Sir Hury Byert, Middlet'n had nere ha lookt behind it agen.

Master.—And who has been nibblin' at wages, as thou wert saying?

Weaver.—Why, Snidgers yonder, at th' Hedgelone. They sen, at-te bated a hawpenny a peawnd th' last Setturday, at ther broad-ribb'd fustian; an' Hook-thum an' Son, o' Hollinwood, bated sixpence a cut th' Monday afore.

Master.—These are two very bad moves i'th' way o' business, and I hope the examples will not be followed, William; it's not the way to "live an' let live," which ought to be the rule always betwixt master and workman.

Weaver.—It ought so to be, indeed, mestur; yo sen true, an' I only wish at o' mesters wurn o' yore mind; th' warkman wud then be sure o' havin' a just consideration for his wark. An' iv th' mesturs did'n but know wot a peawer they han for makin' bad things an' marrin' good uns, they'dn stop, an' look afore 'em, ere they gan way to sitch a grabbin' o' money.

Master.—What thou says is right, William; and I am glad to hear that one of my weavers has so much good thought in him. "Live an' let live," is accordin' to Jesus Christ's rule, and whatever master gets his money by a rule different from that—rich, beyond measure, though he become—happy he never can be either in this world or the next; an' that is an awful consideration, is it not, William?

Weaver.—It is, mester; it's awful to think that a mon shall be tryeadin' o' carpets an' ridin' in coaches to-day, an' tryeadin' o' brimstone an' rowlin' i' hell foyer to-morn.

Master.—And yet it must be so, with unjust employers, or truth in God's Holy Word there is none. Hitherto, however, we cotton masters and our workmen have gone nearly hand in hand together. There have been blamable characters on both sides certainly, but generally speaking, they have acted pretty fairly towards each other. Has it not been so, William?

Weaver.—It has bin mostly as yo sen, mester.

Master.—And I do greatly wish it may so continue. But I am afraid, William—I am afraid this insatiable thirst after money and power, which is now making great progress amongst mankind, will, in the end, divide the masters and workmen of this country, making the former into a set of



tyrants, and the latter into a fearful multitude of moody, hateful slaves.

Weaver.—I hope thattattle not be i' yore days, nor mine noather, mester.

Master.—I hope it will not come to pass soon, William; but I fear it will come eventually. I hear almost every day a new dogma quoted, namely, that the great principle of commerce is "to buy at the cheapest, and sell at the dearest, market." I cannot act upon it. It is not honest—it is not Christian like—it is not wise. Let us try this vaunted principle, William, by the test of honesty—by the test of "Do thou unto others as thou wouldest they should do unto thee"—and there is no better test of right and wrong under heaven. Suppose thou and thy family were distressed from want of employment; and thou came to me asking for work, and I, knowing thy situation, purchased thy labour "at the cheapest rate at which I could get it," and sold it again at the dearest, putting the profit screwed out of thy necessities into my pocket—suppose I did so—should I be acting like a Christian? like an honest, conscientious man?

Mistress.—Dear Thomas, I know you will never act in that manner: it would cover us with self-reproach; and neither you, nor I, nor the children, would ever become rich in the true riches of contentment, whatever were the wealth in gold, which we obtained by such unworthy means.

Weaver.—Kind Madam, yo're very good and considerate tord us worchin' fokes, and God will, I hope, bless yo and yores, for the worthy use 'at yo mak'n o' yore prosperity.

Mistress.—Thank you, William; come take a little more ale, and help yourself to tobacco. I assure you, I am always glad to see a honest working man or woman at my table.

Weaver.—Yore good yealth, mam; and yore good yealth, sir; an' happiness to yursels an o' yur family.

Master.—Thank you, William; and the same to you and your family.

Weaver.—I'm oblig'd t'yo, sir. An' neaw I'm thinkin', Suppos', as yo sed'n afore, 'at yo bought'n my necessitous labour at th' lowest price 'at yo cud'n get it at, an' sowd'n it



at th' heeist, an' isted o' puttin' o' th' profit i' yore own pocket, yo gan me th' tone hawve on it—wudno that doo?

Master (laughing).—Why, yes, William, that would do very well, I should think; but then thou knows, the principle of “buying at the cheapest,” would be in that case given up, and I should be paying thee more for thy labour than I bargained for, and there would be an end of the vaunted dogma of trade which we have been talking about. There are other dogmas, however, William, which, though they are not so plausible, nor so much in vogue as the one we have been discussing, are, in my opinion, quite as practicable, and far more just.

Weaver.—I shudbe fain to yer 'em explaint, sir.

Master.—We will say at once, then, that “the labourer ‘should be deemed worthy’ of his hire,” and that he should have it also.

Weaver.—Good, sir.

Master.—That the hire of the labourer should never be less than what was sufficient to feed him, to clothe him, and to furnish him with the necessaries of a comfortable existence. This should be an inevitable condition of all labour.

Weaver.—Very good.

Master.—The cost of labour being thus immutably determined, all other costs would depend on supply and demand. With this condition, trade would be an honest and respectable vocation. Without this condition, fair trade cannot exist, for it ceases to be trade, and becomes spoliation, ruin, and dishonour.

Weaver.—That's graidly true. A trade 'at dusno pay th' warkmon for his wark is no trade at o, but a robbery an' a disgrace to th' country.

Master.—Just so. When, therefore, our commercial men talk about “buying in the cheapest, and selling in the dearest, market,” they should always except human labour in their calculation. It is the bread and the means of existence of our fellow-beings, and it ought not, under any circumstances, to be placed in competition with mere money making, nor wantonly exposed to vicissitude. Sacredly inviolable it ought

ever to be held. It is the source of all wealth, of all national strength and vitality, and the least price that should ever be given for it ought to be an ample sufficiency of all the necessaries of life. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." Now, William, thou knowest what *my* "cheapest market" for wages will ever be; for if it happens that I can no longer give my workpeople the means for a comfortable subsistence in return for their labour, I will cease to employ them.

Weaver.—I wud 'at that mornin' may never oppen it een, at ony rate.

Master.—Now we will go back to the warehouse, and I will find thee a warp and weft at the old price.

Mistress.—Farewell, William, and give my respects to your good-wife at home.

Weaver.—I will, Madam. An' mony thanks for yur kyndniss.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### PRAYER MEETINGS—A BOGGART—CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION.

My companions at this time were about half a dozen of as wild and gamesome beings as could be found in our neighbourhood. Very demure and reserved were we whilst under the eyes of our guardians or parents, but the moment we were beyond their ken our license for gambol and mirth was as great as had been our restraint. At Sunday school we were regular attendants, and each went away with his crumb of instruction. At the sermons we were frequently present, but from those meetings we generally departed as unregenerate as we came. What could our young heads or hearts make of the mysteries and creeds of the pulpit? They were strange, certainly; wonderfully incomprehensible were these matters which the preachers tried to impress on us; undeniable also as the fact of our own existence appeared to our unreasoning minds—the certainty that we must be either “born again,” or damned eternally. So we sang when others sang, we prayed when others prayed, we sat out the sermon, sang and prayed again, when, hungry and impatient, we ran home to our meals, and then stole out to play. Sometimes the religious observances of the Methodists were sought by us as opportunities for rude sport. One place was in particular a favourite resort of ours. About once a month, a number of the most gifted members of the Methodists’ society went over from Middleton to hold a prayer meeting at the house of Samuel Hamer, in Grunsha Lane. Mr. Hamer was a small farmer possessing some little property; he and his wife had recently become converts to Methodism. That respectable and very loving couple, with

their only child, a son, were constant attendants at the chapel at Middleton, and were as exemplary in their duties as they were zealous in the propagation of their new religion. Mrs. Hamer was a clever, talented, good-looking woman ; one likely to be influential, for she had an uncommon "gift of prayer," and as the house in Grunsha Lane was in a district bordering on Tonge, Alkrington, and Chadderton, where "Satan had as yet many strongholds," these prayers were looked on as so many assaults on "the powers of the Prince of the Air." The leaders of the meeting generally assembled at Samuel Smith's, who lived at the corner of Union Street, Middleton. There would perhaps be half-a-dozen of men, a woman or two, and a party of us lads. With coats buttoned up, lanthorns lighted, and sticks in hand, the men led the way, the women following, and the boys hovering sometimes before, sometimes behind. When, however, we were fairly in the fields, one of our party of lads would be missing ; a whistle would be heard through the darkness, and loitering behind until the men and women were at a distance, we would set off as we could, helter-skelter, over hedge and ditch in quest of the whistler. This, especially on dark gusty nights, when we could scarcely hear each other's voices, and often became lost for a time, was fine, exciting sport. A low yell, like that of a hound, would occasionally recall us to the pack, or to some comrade thrown out of the way like one's self. Then there were particular places where one did not like to be quite alone, lest we fell in with company other than mortal. Such were Babylon Brow, going up to the heights of Tonge, and Tonge Wood, a thick dark plantation, and Tonge Springs, fairy-haunted, and its brook-bubbling sounds, like human words. On fine moonlight nights also, during the chase, things would be sometimes seen, and sounds heard, which one could not exactly make out ; and as these added to the spirit of adventure, and were seldom of a decidedly terrific character, they served but to increase our excitement and relish of the pastime. When at the meeting, a hymn having been sung, and a prayer or two made, on a signal being given, we would slip out without exciting notice, and have another hunt over the fields and across the hedges



after which we returned, joined in the concluding devotions, and came home, our good guardians little dreaming of the sinful manner in which we had spent the holy Sabbath evening. On one of these night adventures I was certainly rather startled by what took place. My comrades had set out and left me behind, and in order to overtake them, I began to run, and had not run far, when I saw one before me running also, whom I seemed to be gaining ground upon fast. I soon made him out to be a lad of our party whom I knew I could easily outrun, and I chuckled at the idea of mortifying him by passing him at full speed, as I intended to do. When I got nearer I called out, but he still kept onward, making no answer. When close behind him I shouted, "Bill! Bill! why so fast?" but there was no notice—no reply—which I thought rather strange, and when I came abreast of him, I said in a tone of defiance, "Come on, then, and see whot theawrt short of," and darting past him like an arrow, I turned my head with an air of triumph, and saw a face—not Bill's, but that of one who had been dead many years. I now ran in earnest to get rid of him, but on looking back, saw he was within a few yards of my heels. He seemed almost to sweep the ground, whilst I passed the low fields betwixt Tonge Springs and Grunsha Lane, I know not how, but at an incredibly swift pace. In the lane he was still close behind me, and when I turned towards the door of the meeting-house, there was nothing to be seen or heard, save the tone of one in earnest prayer, and the frequent responses of "Amen, Amen." The lad whom I had set out to run against was inside on his knees, and I crept beside him and prayed more really in earnest that night than I had done during a long time before. I never mentioned the circumstance to my comrades lest I should get laughed at by them, or be seriously questioned and admonished by the elder Methodists if it came to their knowledge. Poor Bill was afterwards killed at Talavera; as good a specimen of dogged straight-forward John Bullism was he, as ever left England. Mr. Hamer died suddenly in the hayfield; his widow, on a rather short courtship, became the wife of our friend Samuel Smith; and her young son in process of time became a leading character

amongst the Methodists, and is now, I believe, one of their travelling preachers.

Methinks I hear one Sanctimonia exclaim—"And a pretty way of bringing up the rising generation was that of the old Methodists at Middleton."

To which I reply by asking: "How would you bring them up better?"

"Oh," says Sanctimonia, "parents or guardians should always accompany their youthful charge to places of public worship, or should commit them to the care of vigilant elders who would reprehend every indication of levity or inattention."

"But could you govern the eye? Could you restrain the wanderings of the mind or of the heart?"

"No, but the bodily positions could be regulated, leaving the rest to God."

"You would exact 'the outward and visible sign,' then, whether or not 'the inward and spiritual grace' were present?"

"I would."

"A very easy method that, of manufacturing devotees, but let me say that, in my opinion, you would begin at the wrong end, and that the article after all would be spurious. We have plenty of it nowadays, and I believe it is produced by a process very much like that which you recommend."

"What sort of an article, as you call it, would you produce?"

"I would, with God's help, try to produce a genuine one, a true Jesus Christ's own Christianity."

"And how would you set about it?"

"In every heart there is at least one germ of goodness. I would cultivate that by every gentle, and kind, and appropriate means; making its practice and development become a pleasure, not less than a duty. For instance, a child may be very impatient or drowsy over a sermon, whose heart would leap, and whose eyes would gush with tears on being addressed with words of kindness, or on seeing a fellow-creature or a dumb beast unworthily treated. Another who is less susceptible of tender feelings would colour with indignation on witnessing

an act of dishonesty or ingratitude. Another would perish sooner than be guilty of an untruth. A fourth shall battle for the weak in right, against the strong in might, whilst his neighbour shall be lion-brave in the endurance of injuries. So one is merciful—cultivate that mercy, and other virtues will arise with it. Another is just—by all means encourage that spirit of justice, and mercy shall be thereby impartially dispensed. Another shall be indignant of wrong—nurture that young heroism, and both justice and mercy will grow up with it. A fourth shall be nobly magnanimous, and is he not so far a Christian? I would, with God's help, train up the tender-hearted child to be just, the just one to be merciful, the veracious one to add graciousness to truth, the heroic one to be moderate in triumph, and the magnanimous one to be powerful as well as endurant. In every assemblage of youth, all these good qualities are to be found, like gems strewed in darkness. Why should they be left to be lost? Precious emanations are they of God's own being. Let us worship God by deeming His gifts worthy of our care—most solicitous care. Children would understand this kind of religion better; they would love it better, they would imbibe it sooner, than the present one

“ Of sermonising and catechising,  
And bell-ringing, and drone-singing,  
And knee-bowing, and pride-showing,  
Of vain finery, and mock shinery.”

I would not have it all lip-worship, and form-worship; but heart-worship, coming from the heart, and heart-penetrative, wherever it was introduced. I would, in fact, have less of priestianity, and more of Christ's own Christianity; less of creeds and dogmas, and more of the living faith which bringeth forth works, testifying to the reality of a true belief.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### PASTIMES AND OBSERVANCES.

As my wish is to give a true description of the life which I led in my early days, and consequently of the manners and customs to which that life would be conformable, I shall only be proceeding with the proper end in view, if I give an account of the games, pastimes, and observances, which were prevalent amongst both the youthful and the more mature classes of the working population of my neighbourhood at the time I am writing about ; and this may be considered as less irrelevant, inasmuch as that most of the pastimes and diversions which I shall describe are no longer practised—some of them not even known—by the youthful population of the manufacturing districts at the present day. Thus we are enabled distinctly to perceive the great change which, in a few years, has taken place in the tastes and habits of the working classes. And, seeing these alterations clearly set forth, we shall be better able to determine whether or not the labouring classes have been advancing in, or retrograding from that state of mind, and that bodily habit, which are meant by the term, Civilisation.

It was always a custom with the Methodists to hold a public prayer-meeting or “watch-night” at the chapel, and to continue in prayer or singing from the eve of Christmas day to the following morning ; when the leaders, and such of the attendants as chose to accompany them, perambulated the town, singing hymns and carols, and stopping to sing before the dwellings of individuals of their own society, or of any other individual who was of their congregation, or who was generally respected. On the forenoon of the following day,



they also generally held another prayer-meeting, unless there was service at the chapel, whilst in the evening there was generally a full service. On New Year's Eve there was a prayer-meeting again. And these were the chief Christmas observances of the religious body with which I was associated in worldly matters.

Some two or three weeks before Christmas it was the custom in families to apportion to each boy or girl weaver a certain quantity of work, which was to be done ere his or her holidays commenced. An extra quantity was generally undertaken to be performed, and the conditions of the performance were such indulgences and gratuities as were agreeable to the working parties. In most families, a peck or a strike of malt would be brewed; spiced bread or potato custard would be made, and probably an extra piece of beef, and some good old cheese would be laid in store, not to be touched until the work was done. The work then went on merrily. Play hours were nearly given up, and whole nights would be spent at the loom, the weavers occasionally striking up a hymn or Christmas carol in chorus. A few hours of the late morning would perhaps be given to rest; work would be then resumed, and the singing and rattle of shuttles would be almost incessant during the day. In my uncle's family we were all singers, and seldom a day passed on which several hymns were not sung. Before Christmas we frequently sung to keep ourselves from sleep, and we chorused "Christians, awake," when we ourselves were almost gone in sleep.

I recollect, on one of these occasions, my aunt had a very nice brew of ale in the buttery, and as we were working extra hours, I suggested that an allowance of it should be served to us whilst so working, instead of its being reserved until the work was done, when we should no longer require it. My aunt, however, would not give way; not a drop must be tasted until the work was finished. I determined, therefore, on helping myself, deeming it no dishonesty to obtain a part of my good fare when it was most wanted. I got a hollow straw, therefore, and whenever I went into the buttery, which was not unusual with any of us, I introduced my tube into

the bung hole and sucked until I was satisfied for that time. This was repeated on several other occasions, and at last I heard my aunt say to my uncle that she thought the ale was not working so well as she could wish it to do. He told her to fill it up, and it would be prime ale, no doubt. So she filled it up, and I sucked it down; she filled it again, and again the barm was below the bung-hole. I, chuckling with mischievous glee at my poor aunt's embarrassment, who no doubt began to have surmises that something not exactly "of this world" might have interfered with it, at last one day, as I was having a most refreshing draw, a bump on the back drove my nose into the barm, and there stood my aunt, crying out, "Ah, I've catch'd him! I've catch'd him i' th' fact!" She brought me forth, and narrated my trick to my uncle, who sat smoking, and though he endeavoured to look angry, could not help laughing until tears ran down his face.

Christmas holidays always commenced at Middleton on the first Monday after New Year's Day. By that day every one was expected to have his work finished. That being done, the cuts were next carefully picked and plated, and made up for the warehouse, and they having been despatched, the loom-house was swept and put in order; the house was cleaned, the furniture rubbed, and the holidays then commenced. The ale was tapped, the currant-loaf was sliced out, and lad and lass went to play as each liked best; the boys generally at football, and both boys and girls at sliding, when there was ice on the ground. In wet weather we should have a swinging rope in the loom-house, or should spend the day in going from house to house amongst our playmates, and finishing at night by assembling in parties of a dozen or a score, boys and girls, where on some warm, comfortable hearth we sat singing carols and hymns, playing at "forfeits," proposing riddles, and telling "fyerin tales," until our hair began to stiffen, and when we broke up we scampered homeward, not venturing to look behind lest the "old one" himself should be seen at our heels.

At this season also it was the custom for the sexton of the church, and the ringers to go from house to house wishing

their neighbours "a merry Christmas," when they were generally invited to sit down, and were presented with a jug of ale and a present in money. This was done at most of the houses, especially if trade was going well; dissenters as well as church people gave, for religious differences had not so far divided the people into sects as to make them forget good neighbourship. It must have been a very furor of religion indeed which could have made my kind and simple-hearted uncle entertain one disparaging feeling towards his fellow townsmen of any party. Nor were the hard-working colliers shut out from the Christmas festivities. They also made it a custom to visit their neighbours, and were treated with ale or money, or both, as the circumstances of the family permitted. The poor sympathised with the poor, their sympathy not being of that description which in these times froths out in rabid speeches to starving multitudes, but was expressed by action as well as by word. "Come, Jim, have a slice of my loaf. Now, Bill, tak' a cup of my ale. Thou deservest whatever thou canst get. I live and work here in cheerful day and sunlight; thou spendest thy life in constant danger, and in little dark cells under ground. Come, don't need inviting. Thou art heartily welcome, and thou canst never be too greatly paid for thy labour." Thus the weaver and the collier would reciprocate their good wishes, which is better after all, more manly, and more in the old English way—more respectfully kind than the vaunted French mode of fraternisation.

At Shrove-tide we had always a holiday on Tuesday, when we went to each other's houses to turn our pancakes, and "stang" such as incurred the penalty by not having eaten their cake before the next cake was ready. The person to be stanged was placed on a pole, and being held on each side, was carried by others to middin and there deposited, amid the laughter and jokes of all present. On one of these occasions my little companion Mima, having to be stanged, and there being no poles at hand, I lifted her like a child and carried her towards the appointed place, she struggling and making a great show of resistance the while, which caused her to fold her arms round my neck, and to hold so closely, that had I



not discovered that she had the sweetest breath as well as the prettiest cheek in Middleton, I must have been a blockhead indeed.

Midlent Sunday, with us called "Cymbalin Sunday," was another of our feasts, when it was customary to eat cymbalin cake,\* and drink mulled ale. This was more particularly the custom at Bury than at any other town in our neighbourhood. Latterly the inhabitants of Heywood and Royton have set up as special observers of this day, though on what pretence I know not, except it be with the view of bringing strangers to their town, whereby shopkeepers may get purchasers of their cake, and publicans of their ale. I know not how to account for the origin of this ancient observance, except by supposing that it is in some way or other derived from the heathen "feast of cymbals." That it has in its very name and manner an allusion to the instrumental cymbal, there can scarcely be a doubt; the name itself, which I here spell as it is pronounced, directly points to such meaning, whilst the form of the cake—the cymbalin—is a more positive indication of its origin. A cymbalin is not a merely round spiced cake—such an one would be a spiced cake only, and would be so termed—but let the maker raise a lump in the middle, like the ball of a cymbal, and turn up the edges like those of the instrument, and any native of South Lancashire will call it a cymbalin. There have been many disputations and surmises about the orthography and derivation of the name—some of those by persons who probably did not know a cymbalin from a cake; but this definition, I think, may be allowed to set the matter at rest. The name is Cymbalin; the form is exactly that of a cymbal: but when or by what means this custom, so directly allusive to a musical instrument, became connected with a Christian observance in our part of the country, some one

\* Usually known as "Simnel Cake" and "Simnel Sunday." Bamford wrote the name as he heard it pronounced. It occurs in Herrick's "Hesperides" (1647)—

"I'll to thee a simnel bring  
'Gainst thou go a-mothering,"

Mid-Lent being Mothering Sunday.



more learned than myself must determine, if it can be determined at all.

Easter was a more important holiday time at Middleton. On Good Friday children took little baskets neatly trimmed with moss, and went "a peace-egging," and received at some places eggs, at some places spiced loaf, and at others half-pennies, which they carried home to their mothers, who would feel proud that their children had been so much respected. On Easter Monday, companies of young men grotesquely dressed, led up by a fiddler, and with one or two in female attire, would go from house to house on the same errand of "peace-egging." At some places they would dance, at others they would recite quaint verses, and at the houses of the more sedate inhabitants, they would merely request a "peace-egg." Money or ale would in general be presented to them, which they afterwards divided and spent. Meantime, the holiday having fairly commenced, all work was abandoned, good eating, good drinking, and new clothing were the order of the day. Men thronged to the ale-houses, and there was much folly, intemperance, and quarrelling amidst the prevailing good humour. On Tuesday night, some unlucky fellow who had got so far intoxicated as not to be able to take care of himself, would be selected to fill the post of lord mayor for the year ensuing, and as—for the sake of the drink and the sport which it afforded—there were always parties on the look-out ready to secure some one suitable for their purpose, the town was seldom at a loss for a lord mayor. Their mode of election, most certainly, was not of so courteous nor so grave a character as are the proceedings of mayoral elections in some of the recently created neighbouring boroughs, but "the Middleton Charter" having been in existence "time out of mind," granted no doubt by some king or lordly ruler, whose very name is lost in remote antiquity, the electors were not very strictly circumscribed in their operations, and they generally went to work without consulting either town's-books, town-clerk, statute, or charter. The individual pitched upon would generally be found in the nook of some ale-house, in the state which has been before described, or if by a more lucky

accident he were picked up from the gutter, he would be conveyed to some friendly tap, where the necessary preparations could be carried on without interruption. The electors who undertook this important duty for "the good of the town" would be mostly of that class of "free burgesses" who, on festive occasions, are always the first at the ale-house and the last to leave it; the first to leave work, and the last to return to it; such as weavers who, disdaining slavery and being for the Charter, are always at leisure to look after their favourite *pints*, with a determination to get, by hook or by crook, as many toward the *six* \* as they can;—cobblers, "Souter Johnnies," "droughty cronies," who'd—

"Rather be a hobble in,  
Than bend to their cobblin';"

hedge joiners, whose chief hedging is that which edges towards the drink mug; and dusty-throated colliers, who certainly, of all the working classes, have the greatest apology for a good wash-down of ale. Such being the electors, what might be the mode of election?

First of all, then, if the candidate happened to have a somewhat decent coat on his back, it was stripped and given into the care of the landlord, or his equally obliging wife. The face of the candidate was next well daubed with soot and grease, his hair would be dusted with both soot and flour, a pig-tail made from a dish-clout would be appended behind, a woman's kirtle, a cap, a hat without crown, an old jacket, an old sack, or any other shred of dress which the imagination of his lordship's robbers could construe either into an article of adornment or deformity, would be placed upon him so as to have its greatest effect. He would then be taken into the street, placed on a chair, or in an armchair if too far gone to sit upright, and proclaimed "Lord Mayor of Middleton," with every demonstration of drunken and mischievous glee. If the landlord, for reasons best known to himself, declined the honour of furnishing one of his old chairs for the procession,

\* Written in 1848, when the Chartist agitation collapsed. The charter consisted of "six pints."

as most likely he would do, his lordship would probably be hoisted on a pole, with attendants balancing him on each side; or he might be laid upon a ladder, or mounted upon some poor strayed donkey; and so, amid shouts, laughter, yells, and oaths, would be conducted through the streets and lanes of his new dominions. It was generally somewhat past midnight ere his lordship commenced this his first survey, and the noise which accompanied his approach was such as permitted but few of his subjects to remain in repose. A loud knocking would be heard at every door, whilst many voices called out, "Come deawn, milord wants his dues," "Milord wants his dues." If the window were opened and one within said, "Well, yo' met'n make a less din, an' behange'd to yo'; heer's tuppence, an' be off wi' yo';" the response would be, "Hur-rey! milord's gett'n his dues; come, let's try this next dur. Hur-rey! Hur-rey!" And so was chosen, elected, installed, and paraded, the lord mayor of Middleton.

On the forenoon of the following day his lordship might perhaps be seen, half washed and not yet awoken, on the form of the noisiest tap-room of the town. His conductors of the over-night drinking, smoking, dancing, and singing, in the same place. Some having been fighting, some ready to fight, some with black eyes, others with torn and bloody clothes, some with scarcely any clothes at all, whilst anon, constables would be peering about and making inquiries as to who it was that kicked open such a door? who smashed such a window? who stole this body's can? who broke that body's mug? and a woful reckoning being promised for next week, some of the marauders would look serious. And, in truth, if the affair got over without some damages having to be made good, some law having to be hushed up, it was considered a very peaceable and exemplary election, and the "free burgesses" were in good heart for a repetition next year.

This custom was analogous to one which prevailed at Ashton-under-Lyne on Easter Monday, and which was called "Riding the Black Lad." At Ashton, however, the ceremony took place in the day time, when the figure of a man dressed in black was paraded through the streets, mounted on a horse,



or a sorry nag of any kind. The origin of these customs is involved in obscurity. Both customs seem to have had one origin, and to have been held in derisive commemoration of some member of the Assheton family, as no such custom prevailed except in the two townships connected with the Asshetons. At Ashton the figure was ignominiously paraded in the day-time; at Middleton, as we see, "The Lord Mayor," all blackened and soiled, and, in fact, disguised, was paraded at midnight, and with mock authority demanded "his dues." The ceremony at Ashton would seem to be expressive of hatred and contempt, that of Middleton to indicate the cause of it, namely, severe and arbitrary exaction. Another supposition also arises, namely, that the Ashton ceremonial would scarcely have been allowed to take place, had the object of it been on the spot in the person of a powerful chief; and we may thence infer that he was gone thence to some other place. At Middleton, however, the ceremony was performed at midnight, in comparative secrecy and obscurity; and on the night but one following the day exhibition at Ashton. And this circumstance seems to indicate that the object of distaste was present at the latter place, with the power as well as the will to punish those who incurred his displeasure; hence it might be that the ceremonial took place at midnight. Ralph Assheton, Esquire, a son of Sir John Assheton, Knt. of Ashton-under-Lyne, having married a daughter of Richard Barton, Esquire of Middleton, in 1438, became lord of the manor of Middleton, and left Ashton to reside at the latter place. He was called the "Black Knight," and tradition points to him as the original of the "Black Lad."

On Easter Wednesday, what was called "The White Apron Fair," was held at Middleton. It was merely an occasion for the young wives and mothers, with their children, and also for the young marriageable damsels, to walk out to display their finery and to get conducted by their husbands, or their sweet-hearts, to the ale-house, where they generally finished by a dance, and their inamoratos by a battle or two, and their consequences, bruised hides and torn clothes.



The night of the 1st of May was "Mischief-neet," when, as "there is a time for all things," any one having a grudge against a neighbour was at liberty to indulge it, provided he kept his own counsel. On these occasions it was lawful to throw a neighbour's gate off the angles, to pull up his fence, to trample his garden, to upset a cart that might be found at hand, to set cattle astray, or to perform any other freak, whether in the street, house-yard, or fields, which might suggest itself or be suggested. The general observation in the morning would be, "Oh, it's nobbut th' mischief-neet." If a young fellow wished to cast a slur on a lass, he would hang a rag containing salt at her parents' door, or he would cast some of the same material on her doorstep, as indicative of gross inclinations. If he remained unknown he escaped punishment, but if he were detected, or his secret became divulged, he generally got thrashed, as he deserved, by a brother, or some favoured swain, or he might get his face channelled by the fair one's nails the next time she met him, or a mop slapped against his cheek, or a vessel of odorous liquid poured on his clothes as he passed the desecrated threshold; all or any of which retaliations would earn for him but small sympathy with his neighbours—the men chuckling or laughing and saying nothing: and the women all agreeing, "Aye, it sarves him quite reet, th' wastril." A gorse bush indicated a woman notoriously immodest; and a holly bush, one loved in secret; a tup's horn intimated that man or woman was faithless to marriage; a branch of sapling, truth in love; and a sprig of birch, a pretty girl. If a house floor wanted cleaning, a mop would be left for that purpose; and if a dame was notorious for her neglect of needle-work, a ragged garment of some sort would be hung at her door. The morning after "mischief-neet" was generally prolific of gossip and some laughter, as it generally became known by breakfast-time what "lumber" (mischief) farmer So-and-so had had done, and what this young girl, or that young widower, found at their doors when they opened them.

The feast of Whitsuntide was not attended by any particular local customs, except the relics of the old "Whitsun ales,"

which consisted in what were termed "main brews" of ale; a number clubbing to purchase malt which was brewed by one selected from the party, and drunk at one of the houses. Dances and ale-house fuddles were also common, and latterly races attracted vast crowds to the scene of their operations. sticks were indispensable to pedestrians on these occasions, and hazel or holly sticks, with the peel taken off in a spiral form, were considered the very example of a country "somebody." Oldham pedestrians went to the races by hundreds, and were designated as "Owdham Brewis;" whilst Rochdale folks, still more numerous, were known as "Ratchda Roof-yeds." The inhabitants of Blackley were "Blackley Lions," perhaps from the circumstance of their having lions for the signs of their two public-houses; people who come from Bowlee were "Bowlee Tups"; whilst the inhabitants of Middleton were retaliated upon as "Middleton Moons," a term indicative of a notion that, with all their wit, they were not more wise than their neighbours.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE WAKES.

BUT "The Rush-bearing" was the great feast of the year, and was held on the anniversary of the dedication of the church. At Middleton it is held on the third Saturday in August, or if there be five Saturdays in the month, it falls on the fourth. From tradition, as well as from custom itself, we may conclude that at first it was a simple offering towards making the church floor comfortable during the winter services. Every family having then its separate bench to sit upon, some one or two of them would at first strew their own floors with rushes to promote the warmth of their feet during the stormy months. Others perceiving how snugly and cosily their neighbours sat, would follow the example. Probably the priest would encourage the new luxury, and it would soon become common. Thus Nan and Dick, and Bob and Bet, would be seen carrying bundles of rushes to the church at the feast of the dedication, and the church would be littered for the winter. Next, families forming small hamlets of the parish would unite, and pitching each their quota of rushes into a cart, would send down a load. Some of these hamlets in order, probably, to ingratiate themselves with the priest, by rendering extra homage to the church, would arrange and decorate their rushes with green boughs; others would excel them; and a rivalry as to which hamlet could bring the neatest formed and the most finely decorated load of rushes would ensue, and thus the present quaint and graceful "rush-cart" would be in time produced. Music, dancing, and personal finery would accompany and keep pace with the increasing display; the

feast would become a spectacle for all the surrounding districts, and the little wood-shadowed village, would annually become a scene of a joyous gathering and a hospitable festivity; and thus, the wakes, as they existed in my early days, would be gradually produced.

The folds or hamlets which mostly sent "rush-carts" to Middleton, were Boarshaw, Thornham, Hopwood, Birch, Bowlee, and Tonge. About a month or six weeks before the wakes, the young men of the hamlets, as well as those of the town, would meet at their respective rendezvous, which was some ale-house, where the names of such as wished to join the party during the wakes were given in, and the first instalment of money was paid. These meetings were called "enterings," and they always took place on Sunday evenings, when each one paid a certain sum towards a general fund, and a trifle more for drink at their meetings. It was the interest of these young fellows to raise as strong a party as they could, not only with a view to a plenteous fund, but also in order to repel—if necessary—aggression from other parties; for as these little communities were seldom without a few old grudges to fall back upon should an opportunity offer, it was very extraordinary indeed if a quarrel did not take place amongst some of them, and half-a-dozen battles were not foughten before the wakes ended. It was consequently an object with each to get as numerous a party and as heavily bodied an one as they could, agility and science not being so requisite in Lancashire battles as weight, strength, and endurance. These young fellows, therefore, mustered as imposingly as they could, and if one or two of the young women of the place happened to have sweethearts who came from a distance—and especially if they were likely to clear their way in a row—the courtiers would probably be found joined with the brothers and friends of their fair ones. Well, the "enterings" having been formed, and the subscriptions duly paid, a rush-cart would be determined upon. Such a farmer's broad-wheeled cart was to be bespoke. Then, lads and lasses would at all spare hours be engaged in some preparation for the feast. New clothes would be ordered; and their quantity and quality would probably depend on the



amount of money saved during the year, or on the work performed in a certain time before the wakes. Jack would obtain, if he could, "a bran new suit, wi' trindl't shurt," and Bess would have her "geawn made wi' tucks an' fleawnnces; new shoon wi' ston op heels; new stockin's wi' clocks; a tippit wi' frills o reawnd; monny a streng o necklaces; an' a bonnit made by th' new mantymaker, the prattyist 'at ever wur seen, wi' a skyoy blue underside, an' pink ribbins." By "day skrike" in a morning, or by "neet-gloom" in the evening, the jingle of morrice bells would be heard along the lanes and field roads; for the lads having borrowed each his collar of bells at neighbouring farmhouses, would hang them on their necks and come jingling them home, waking all the echoes in the deep lanes, and the meadow nooks, and the old grey solitary places, until the very air was clamorous of the bell tingle and the musical roll of the crotal.\* Ropes and stretchers would also be borrowed, and the rushes growing in certain waste pieces having been marked out, and when necessary bargained for with the owner of the land, mowers were appointed, and a day or two before the commencement of the wakes the rushes were cut down. An old experienced hand was generally engaged to "make the cart," that is, to lay on, and build up, and trim the rushes, according to the design which is always adopted in such constructions. The girls meanwhile would all be employed at over-hours getting their own finery and that of their brothers or sweet-hearts ready for the great event. Tinsel was purchased, hats were trimmed with ribbons and fanciful devices; shirts were washed, bleached snow-white, and neatly pleated; tassels and garlands, and wreaths of coloured paper, tinsel, and ribbon were designed and constructed, and a grand piece of ingenuity and splendour, a kind of concentration of the riches and the pomp of the party was displayed in the arrangements and setting forth of "the sheet." This was exclusively the work of the girls and women, and in proportion as it was happily designed and fitly put together or otherwise, was their praise or disparagement meted out by the public, a point on which

\* A kind of cymbal.

they would probably be not a little sensitive. The sheet was a piece of very white linen, generally a good bed sheet, and on it were arrayed pretty rosettes, and quaint compartments and borderings of all colours and hues which either paper, tinsel, or ribbons, or natural flowers could supply. In these compartments were arrayed silver watches, trays, spoons, sugar-tongs, tea-pots, snuffers, or other fitting articles of ornament and value, and the more numerous and precious the articles were the greater was the deference which the party which displayed them expected from the wondering crowd. Musicians were also secured in good time; a fiddler for the chamber dancing always, and never less than a couple of fifers and a drummer to play before the cart. But if the funds would allow, and especially in later times, a band of instrumentalists would be engaged, often a sorry affair certainly, but still "a band" to swear to, and that would be a great thing for the ears of the multitude. All true church-goers were duly apprised of the wakes, as its date was cried by the bellman in the churchyard whilst the congregation were leaving the church, on three Sunday afternoons previous to its commencement. The morning of the great day comes, and every one is in a state of bustle and anxiety. Heads of families are bundling up their work and hastening off to town in order to be back in time for the opening of the wakes. And now, the rushes having been mown are carted to the place where the cart is to be made. The maker with his assistants are all present; the wheels are sunken in holes, and the cart is well propped to make it steady; the peeled rods and binders are set up so as to make the structure steady, and to give the proper form as it advances; ale is poured out and drunk liberally; numerous youngsters are playing and rolling about on the rush-heap, whilst others are making of them small sheaves bound at each end, and being cut in the middle with a scythe-blade are called "bowts" (bolts); others again are culling the finest of the rushes and making them into "bowts" of a superior description wherewith to form a neat edging to the front and back of the structure. And so they keep binding and cutting and piling up until "the cart" is completed, which now presents

the form almost of a flattened bee-hive, with the ends also flattened, and ornamented with a projecting edging of rush-bolts, which gives them a quaint and trim appearance. The sheet, before described, is displayed with all its wonder-exciting treasures in front of the cart; sometimes another sheet less costly is exhibited behind, and when that is not the case, letters and various devices in flowers are generally found there. The top of the cart, or rush-heap, is stuck with green boughs which wave and nod like plumes, and amongst them one or two of the young men who have been the latest married take their seats astride the load. The drawers, all donned in ribbon finery and tinsel, now begin to make their appearance; some dozen or so of the leaders having bells around their necks. The drum is beating, the music is blowing and snorting and screaming, the gay tinkling of morrice bells is floating and waking up the echoes. The children are wild with joyful expectation, or astonished by the wondrous fairy scene. The girls bepranked in their new pumps, kirtles, and bonnets, now add beauty to the spectacle; and on the arm of each may be noticed the best Sunday coat and doublet of her brother, or her sweetheart. The ropes are attached, the stretchers noosed fast at proper distances; all is ready. The music strikes up louder; the driver clears the way with his long whip, making it give a loud and clear crack at every stroke—that being his feat—the word is “Neaw, lads,” and at one strong pull, and a heave of the shafts, the wheels are dislodged from their socket holes, and the cart is slowly drawn up to the level sward, amid the loud shouts of the admiring gazers; and so, with music-clangour, and bell-jingle, and laughter, and words of caution, as, “Howd on, lads,” “Gently, lads,” the quaint and romantically fantastic spectacle moves towards the village of its destination.

If the party can go to the expense of having a set of morrice dancers, and feel inclined to undertake the trouble, some score or two of young men, with hats trimmed, and decked out as before described, precede the drawers, dancing in couples to various simple country tunes, one of which may be measured by this stanza:—



—    —    —    —    —    —  
 My new shoon they are so good,  
 —    —    —    —    —    —  
 I cou'd doance morrice if I wou'd;  
 —    —    —    —    —    —  
 An' if hat an' sark be drest,  
 —    —    —    —    —    —  
 I will doance morrice wi' the best.

In some later instances there have been processions of banner and garland bearers, with all beautiful flowers, artificial or real, and apt and ingenious devices. A choice beauty of the village may also, on some occasions, be induced to personate the Queen of the Wake, walking under a bower borne by four of her companions, and preceded by dancers and the other pageants described. But these spectacles I should rather suppose to be of comparatively modern introduction in this part of Lancashire.

Arrived at the village, other parties similar to their own will be found parading their cart on the high road. The neighbouring folds and hamlets, having been nearly deserted by their inhabitants, all are there concentrated seeing the wakes and partaking in the universal enjoyment. The highway is thronged by visitors in gay attire, whilst shows, nut stalls, flying-boxes, merry-go-rounds, and other means of amusement are rife on every hand. Should two carts meet, and there be a grudge on either side, a wrangle, and probably a battle or two, settles the question, and they each move on; if the parties are in amity, they salute each other with friendly hurras, the drawers holding their stretchers above their heads until they have passed. Each cart stops at the door of every public-house, which the leaders enter tumultuously, jumping, jingling their bells, and imitating the neighing of horses. A can of ale is then generally brought to the door and distributed to the drawers and attendants; those who ride on the top not forgetting to claim their share. When the whole town or village has been thus perambulated, the cart is drawn to the green near the church, where the rushes are deposited—or should be—though latterly, since the introduction of pews in the church, they have generally been sold to the best bidder.



The moment the first cart arrives on the green the church bells strike up a merry round peal in honour of those who have thus been alert to testify their devotion; but as the rushes are now seldom left at the church, so neither is the ringing so strictly performed as it wont to be; and, in fact, though the name and the form are in some degree retained, it is evident that attachment to our venerable state-worship has far less influence in the matter than it had in the days of my early life.

After disposing of their rushes, either by gift to the church—in which case they became the perquisite of the sexton—or by sale to the best bidder, the lads and their friends, sweet-hearts, and helpers repaired to the public-house at which they put up for the wakes, and there spent the night in drinking and dancing. On Sunday some of the principal banners and garlands, which had been paraded the day before, were displayed in the church; and on Sunday night the lads and lasses again met at the public-house, where they drank, smoked, and treated their neighbours and friendly visitors from other public-houses. Sunday was also the great day for hospitality. Relations living at a distance, old friends and acquaintances, being generally invited to the wakes, considerable numbers of well-dressed people would be seen in the forenoon entering the town from all quarters. Then, the very best dinner which could be provided was set out, the ale was tapped, and the guests were helped with a profusion of whatever the host could command. It was a duty at the wakes to be hospitable, and he who at that time was not liberal according to his means, was set down as a very mean person. Even decent strangers who apparently had no fixed place of visitation, would be frequently called in as they passed the open door and invited to partake with the family and other guests, and would be made entirely welcome to whatever the house afforded. This was not the custom at Middleton only, but at all wakes holidays in that neighbourhood, and at none was it carried out with more genuine and hearty welcome than at Oldham. The town would, during the afternoon of this Sunday, be thronged with visitors; private houses were mostly

occupied, and the public-houses were crowded, whilst dealers in nuts, oranges, and Eccles cakes vended their wares from basket or stall, and shows, flying-boxes, and whirligigs stood there, mute and still, as if in admonition of the vain, restless, and wearying crowd which floated around them. Monday was the day for hard drinking, and for settling such disputes and determining such battles as had not come off on Saturday. Tuesday was again a drinking day, with occasional race-running, and more battles at night. Wednesday would be spent in a similar manner. On Thursday the dregs of the wakes-keepers only would be seen staggering about. On Friday a few of the dregs of the dregs might be met with; Saturday was woful, and on Sunday all would be over, and sobered people, going to church or chapel again, would make good resolutions against a repetition of their week's folly. And thus would have passed away the great feast of "The Wakes."

From this time, as days began to shorten fast, candles were lighted up in the loom-houses, and what was called "wakin' time" commenced—not so termed from the keeping of the wakes, but from the lighting up—the waking with candles.

When the fine clear nights of late August came, many were the joyous gatherings of lad and lass on the broad open green in front of the houses of Barrowfields. Two or three score of wild, nimble, gleesome beings would assemble there, running, leaping, wrestling, singing, and laughing, in that unalloyed mirthfulness which is the especial blessing of innocent youth. After the various groups had for a while pursued their several sports, some one would call out—"Come neaw, lads an' wenches, let's play together." Immediately the games would cease, and all would be called together, and when they had determined on what they should play at, dispositions would be made accordingly. If it were "Hitch-hatch," all would lay hold of hands, a lad and lass alternately, and a ring be formed, the couples standing at arm's length, and making as large a one as they could. One of the maids then went round on the outside of the ring, with a handkerchief in her hand, which she applied to every pair of hands, and then took away again, repeating as she went round—

“Hitch-hatch, hitch-hatch,  
I’ve a chicken undermi lap;  
Heer I brew, an’ heer I bake,  
An’ heer I lay mi clap-cake”—

laying the handkerchief at the same time on the arm of some youth or maiden, and running away, in and out, across the ring and round about, the one on whose arm the handkerchief was left, following as quick as possible to catch her, and if he or she succeeded in doing so, she must begin and perambulate again, until she can contrive to slip into the vacant space left by her pursuer, when she keeps the station and her pursuer goes round as she did. This, of course, gives an opportunity for a good deal of running and chasing and laughter, and of endeavours to escape when overtaken; which again necessitates a pretty close hold to be had of the captive—not an unpleasant one often—and much merriment until the play proceeds.

If the play was “Bull-i’th’-Barn,” a lad chosen to enact the bull stood within a ring formed as before, and tried to break through by running with all his force against the clasped hands without using his hands to dissever them. The ring would often give way without being broken, and his disappointment would be hailed by shouts of laughter. Again he would survey the ring, and choosing what he considered to be a weak place, he would perhaps break through and take to his heels, when the ring broke up and the whole followed him helter-skelter, and after a smart run and a deal of hauling and fun, he would be brought back captive, and either placed in the ring again, or another be placed instead of him.

“Sheppey,” or “Blackthorne,” was another of our youthful plays. Two or three of the best runners having been selected, they took their station at one end of the green, whilst the main body of their companions were at the other end. The runners then shouted

“Blackthorne,”

which was answered—

“Buttermilk and barleycorn.”

Runners—

“Heaw mony geese han yo’ to-day?”

Answer—

“Moor nor yo’ can oather catch or carry away.”

The two parties approached each other at a swift pace, and the runners made as many of the others prisoners as they could, taking them back to the place from whence they started, when they also took part with the runners in the subsequent game. Thus they kept running and taking prisoners until the whole of the geese party were secured, when they divide, as at first, and the play was renewed.

Other games used by the boys alone were leapfrog, running races, leaping, and wrestling, which expanded our lungs with fresh air and filled our veins with new, life-fraught blood, we continuing our play untired until parents or guardians standing at their doors called us to bed, and to an oblivious healthful repose.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### BONFIRES—SUPERSTITIONS—APPARITIONS.

THE next holiday was on the Fifth of November, the anniversary of the discovery of Gunpowder Plot. Most people ceased from working in the afternoon, and children went from house to house begging coal to make a bonfire, a distich of the following words being their form of application :

“ The Fifth o’ November, I’d hayo remember ;  
A stick an’ a stake for King George’s sake ;  
Pray, dame, gimmi a cob-coal,  
To make a leet i’ Lunnun cellar hole.”

In addition to these contributions gates and fences suffered, and whatever timber was obtainable from the woods and plantations was considered fair game “for King George’s sake.” At night the country would be lighted up by bonfires, or as pronounced in Lancashire, “bunfoyers ;” tharcake and toffy were distributed to the younger members of families, whilst the elder clubbed their pence and at night had “a joynin’” in some convenient dwelling. The lord of the manor made the young men a present of a good two-horse load of coal, with which a huge fire was lighted on The Bank near the church, and kept burning all night and most of the day following. The young fellows also joined at ale from the public-house, and with drinking, singing, and exploding of firearms, they amused themselves pretty well, especially if the weather was favourable. Such were the principal games, pastimes, and observances of the rural population of Middleton and its vicinity when I was a youth. There were other observances,

however, which were supposed to relate to the immaterial world, to give an account of which would perhaps be considered too much out of the line of my narrative. I will, however, briefly describe two of them.

A young woman who wished to have a sight of her future husband would walk three times round the church at midnight, sprinkling hemp-seed, and repeating as she went :—

“ Hemp-seed I sow, hemp-seed I sow,  
And he that must my true love be—  
Come after me and mow.”

When the spirit of the young man she was destined to marry would appear and come mowing at her heels, and if she stopped to scrutinise him over much she was in danger of being cut down. So much for the gallantry of spirit mowers.

We know that according to old legends the two nights of All Saints and All Souls were especially set apart for spiritual appearances. That on the night of All Saints the spirits of the blessed who in the course of the year should depart within the parish were visible in their human forms at the parish church, and that on the night of All Souls the spirits of all those who should die, whether sinner or saint, were also certain to appear in bodily shape. On one of these yearly recurrences Old Johnny Johnson, who was then the sexton, had an irrepressible curiosity to know which of his neighbours should die, as well as to ascertain the amount of grave and other fees and perquisites he was to receive during the next twelve months, so, on the night of All Souls, he concealed himself in the church, and watched the ghostly visitants come in and go out and walk about the place, and a decent number he had already counted up, which at the usual fee per head would amount to a goodly sum. Still they kept dribbling in one by one, and sometimes in couples,

“ Old and young,  
Weak and strong,  
Rosy—pale—  
Faint and hale

Come and go,  
Passing slow ;  
Life in death,  
Not a breath,  
Not a wail."

There sat old Johnny, chuckling and counting up his gains, when at last a little old man made his appearance, and Johnny at the first look knew him to be himself. He had then seen enough, and with all speed he hastened to his home, became very thoughtful, soon after sickened, and within the twelve months he died.

As for the Parish Church of Middleton, every one in those days admitted that there was not a rood of earth around it which was not redolent of supernatural associations. My poor aunt Elizabeth no more doubted these things than she did the truth of every word betwixt the two backs of her Bible. Often when on a winter's night we youngsters were seated round the hearth, and my uncle was engaged elsewhere, would she set her wheel aside, take a pinch of snuff, hutch her chair towards the other hob, and excite our curiosity and wonder by strange and fearful tales of witches, spirits, and apparitions, whilst we listened in silence and awe, and scarcely breathing, contemplated in imagination the visions of an unseen world which her narratives conjured up before us. Often she would tell—for these tales were always new again—how that the venerable servant of God, Mr. Wesley, being benighted on one of his journeys, obtained lodgings at a lone house, and on retiring to his chamber was followed by a huge black dog, which he knew to be an unhappy spirit, to whom, with a feeling of compassion, he flung his gown as a bed for it to lie upon, which it did, and he then making fast the door, went to sleep and had a good night's rest, and on awaking in the morning the dog was gone, though the door remained fastened, and no one belonging to the place knew of such a dog, or had seen such an one about the premises. At other times she would narrate the strange stories of Elizabeth Hobson, who could not walk abroad by night or day without seeing the spirits of departed persons ; who being affianced to a young

suitor, saw his spirit pass her in the street, and walk apparently through the wall of a house, and thereby she knew that he was dead, an account of which soon after came to hand; who made an appointment to meet a spirit at midnight on a lonesome hill, whither she was accompanied part of the way by devout persons, from whom, after earnest prayer, she departed, and by whom she was seen ascending the hill after being joined by others, whom, from her warnings, they knew to be spirits; who, after being on the hill a long time, during which her friends were praying for her, returned and gave an account of many things which she had seen; of the spirits of deceased neighbours and friends she had conversed with whilst on the hill, but refused to divulge certain matters which she stated she was immutably pledged not to disclose, and the awful secrets of which she never could be prevailed upon to utter.

In one of my aunt's communicative moods she told how her grandfather Bamford, being in a delirium, attempted to destroy himself, and was tied down in bed, where religious people came to pray for him, when in order to convince them that all their precautions were vain, and that the Evil One, to whom he was given up, would let him have his will, he drew his hand from the noose, as if he had been merely moving it in an ordinary way, and pointing to a corner of the room told them—to their great terror—that at that precise spot, and at that moment, the dark spirit was waiting to do his slightest bidding. That on learning this horrid fact—of which they had not the least doubt—prayers were redoubled, and doctors were called in, and the latter having bled the patient and forced medicine upon him, he, through God's mercy and "the efficacy of prayer," was restored and afterwards became a devout man. Or she would tell how her sister Mary—a beauty in person, and an angel in mind—died, in the bloom of her days, praising God and blessing all around her; or how her brother Abraham—the pride of the family—having taken a mixture given him by a quack doctor, died shrieking in torment. How James gradually wore away, and Samuel died of fever, and William of consumption.



On another occasion, I and she being alone in the house, she gave me an account which made my heart to thrill and the tears to gush from my eyes. She said no bereavement out of her own family had troubled her more than the death of my mother. "I was at home," she said, "here in Middleton, and was sadly grieved that I had not seen her before she died; both Sally Owen and I were troubled in our minds on that account; but it was no slight matter for the mother of a family to leave them all well here, and to walk into a great fever hospital which the workhouse was at that time. So we judged it best not to go, but to offer up our prayers on her behalf, and on behalf of thee and thy father, and all who were sick. We always remembered you in our prayers, and daily besought God on our bended knees that He would spare you yet a little while, and two out of the four were spared. Well, but Sally an' me cried many a time about thy mother—we never met but we cried about her, and sometimes we blamed ourselves for not goin' a seein' her, and sometimes we were comforted by thinkin' we had done our duty. What troubled us most was the uncertainty about the state of her soul. We were hardly satisfied about that, and we next prayed that if she was happy a token might be vouchsafed whereby we might know that she was so. Still nothing happened, we kept watchin' for tokens but none came, and months and months passed away. At last, Sally was taken in labour, and I went down from these club-houses here to th' Back-o'th'-Brow, and a good time and a safe delivery she had—thank God; an' tow'rd eleven o'clock thy uncle William came to fetch me home, an' we tarried till near midnight, an' as he sat smokin' his pipe, I donn'd my cloak an' bonnet, and said I would be going slowly up th' Bonk, and he would o'ertak' me before I had gotten far on the way, for theaw sees I was rather slow at walkin' i' consequence of my cough an' shortness o' breath. Well, I kept comin' slowly up an' slowly up, an' turning' to see if he were comin', an' I kept creepin' end way till I'd gotten to the bottom o' th' church steps. It was as fine a moonleet neet as ever shone eawt o' th' moon, as cleer very nee as th' noon-day; I could ha' seen to ha' gathert a pin off

th' greawnd. Well, I stooede an' lookt back to see if he wur comin', an' I seed him just meawntin' onto th' bonk, when I yerd th' gate oppen behind me, and lookin' that way, I seed a very fine, tall woman dresst o' i' sparklin' white, come through th' gate an' walk deawn th' steps past me, and go streight under th' trees tow'rd Summer Heawse. The moment I seed her put her foot eawt to come deawn th' steps, that moment I knew her to be thy mother."

"My mother?"

"Aye, thy very mother, or at th' least her spirit."

"I' th' name o' Goodness, aint, whot aryo tellin' me."

"I'm tellin' the' God's own truth, lad; I seed her as plain as I see thee this very minnit. The mother had a foote an' ancle incomparable; I could ha' known her ony time by seeing her step eawt."

"And did you not see her face, then?"

"Nawe, I didno'. I felt a kynd of awe, an' ere I could look up, hoo wur past me."

"And whot then?"

"Oh! hoo walkt streight forrud as if hoor gooin' tow'rd th' Market-place, an' I turn'd me an' watcht her as lung as I cou'd see her, under th' trees, an' through th' moonleet, and through th' shadows, as fair as if it had been noonday. 'Blessed be God,' I said; 'yon's Han-nah; hoo's happy, an' I am satisfied.'"

"An' did you tell my uncle?"

"Nawe; the uncle tow'd me. He coom op to me in a minnit after, an' he said, 'Lisabeth, hooas yon fine woman at's just gone past the?'"

"'Why, did theaw see her, then?' I asked.

"'Aye,' he said, 'I seed her plain enoof; hoo'r not so very far off me, as hoo went deawn heer tow'rd th' Lodge.'

"'Theaw'rt mista'en, lad; hoo went o' this reet side o' th' Beawling Green, an' under th' trees.'

"'Nay,' he said, 'theaw munno say so, lass, hoo went o' this lift side o' th' Green; heaw cud I ha' seen her gooin' tow'rd th' Lodge, if hoo'd gone under th' trees.'

"'Well,' I said, 'that convinces me moor an' moor.'

“ ‘Convinces the’ o’ whot?’

“ ‘ ‘At ween both seen a spirit.’

“ ‘ ‘Nonsense, wench!’ he said; ‘it wur nobbut a very fine lady, o i’ white. I seed her as plain as I see thee. Hoo walkt heer deawn tow’rd th’ Lodge quite natural. Some body happen’at had been a visitin’.’

“ ‘ ‘Visitin’! whot, at this time o’ neet, or reyrther mornin’! Beside, wheer cou’d hoo ha’ come fro’, an’ wheer cou’d hoo begoin’ to? There’s no sitch fine foke heerabeawt.’

“ ‘ ‘True, lass, there isno’, unless it’s sumbody ’at’s been at th’ Clockmakers.’

“ ‘ ‘Th’ Clockmakers! yon’s no company for th’ Clockmakers, as great foke as they ar. Yon’s eawer Daniel wife spirit as sure as I ston heer. I knew her the moment I set my een on her. Thanks be to God ’at I seen her. Hoos comn fro’ heaven, an’ hoo’s gooin’ back theer. “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.”’ An’ so we turn’d an’ coom through th’ churchyard whom, an’ the uncle wur afterwards convinc’d ’at th’ appearance must ha’ bin a sperit. An’ when I tow’d Sally Owin, after hoo’d gett’n better, we both went deawn on eawr knees and returnt thanks for eawer onsur to prayer.”

“ ‘Well,” I said, “I’m glad you have told me of this, aunt. I never had a doubt about my mother’s happiness. I always considered her as too good to go anywhere save to heaven. What you have said has, however, made me still happier, since you and Sally Owen, when she was living, and your most intimate connections, would all be satisfied with respect to my mother’s spiritual state.”

“ ‘Oh! quite so, quite satisfied. Would to God ’at I wur as sure o’ my own salvation.”

“ ‘Is it not strange, aunt, that I have often thought that walk, under the trees and towards the summer-house, was a very solemn place.”

“ ‘Hasto ever thought so, then?’

“ ‘Aye, I’ve always felt strangely attached to the spot, and have taken many a ramble there instead of going with the others to play. Can it be that my mother’s spirit haunts that

place, think you? And that it would be fain to meet me there?"

"Oh, no, chylt! the mother's happy i' heaven, an' if theaw expects to meet her, theaw mun prepare to goo theer."

"Well, I cannot tell how it happens, aunt, but I always feel so calm and soothed when at dusk I walk alone round the green, or sit on the bright grass under the trees. It seems as if I had all the company I desire: I can converse better with myself, as it were—can commune more deeply with my own feelings and thoughts in that lone spot than in any other, Middleton Wood excepted, and probably some of the lone dells of Hopwood. I shall go there oftener."

"There's a deal o' sin committed thereabeawts; pitchin', an' tossin', an' drinkin', an' beawlin', i' summer time."

"Yes, but I go when the rabble are away—when nothing is heard save the distant murmurs from the surrounding habitations. There is something so quaintly hoary in the old summer house, and the tall trees waving in the mysterious twilight just before dark, that I feel as if I were almost in a new existence. I shall go there oftener. My mother has come there once, and she will come again if I wait for her."

"Tempt not God," said my aunt; "the spirit may come again if it is so willed."



## CHAPTER XVII.

### LOVE DAWNINGS.

I CAN scarcely recollect a period of my life when the society of females was not very agreeable to me. I was now, however, approaching that age when this general partiality was to become more individualising, and when amongst the mass which I always contemplated with tender regard, some would be found from whom I could not withhold a still warmer sentiment. Thus were the young germs of love beginning to quicken in my heart; and instead of repressing or controlling them, as I should perhaps have done, or have attempted to do, had I had a wise adviser to counsel me, I abandoned myself to delicious heart-gushings of romantic feeling, bowed in silent but earnest regard to female loveliness, and became soul and heart-bound—profoundly mute, however, except by sighs and looks—to more than one, in succession, of the young beauties of my acquaintance. Thus from an admirer of the sex generally, I became the worshipper of its most lovely forms in particular, and amongst those I was not slow to discover some who to me seemed to surpass all other mortals in beauty and modest worth. Such was the collier's dark-eyed daughter who came every Sunday to school from Siddal Moor: such the tall fair girl who, all blush-coloured, and wild as a young roe, came from the meadow-top at Alkrington: such the pale vocalist from my native suburb, whose sable hair streamed like night-clouds around a statue of snow. Such, also, were others, but why should I dwell on these reminiscences, seeing that I cannot look back and reopen my

heart and find it as it once was; seeing that death has swept some away; that Time has bowed those who remain; that age has subdued love, and that beauty is in ruins.

My cousin Hannah I could have admired because she was pretty, but she understood not my boyish endeavours to please, and repaid them with rudeness, so there was soon an end of romance in that quarter. Little Mima daily grew in my esteem, as well as in beauty, and I felt that I was likely to love her when she was more of a woman, but not as yet.

It would have been a fact entirely at variance with the well-known penetration of females in matters in which the heart is concerned, if some of my fair Cynosures had not penetrated the secret of my feelings. The quick eyes and the virgin sensibilities of several of my young friends detected, as they were sure to do, the state of my feelings, and then whenever our eyes met we were covered with blushes, mutual acknowledgments of a sentiment too delicate for oral expression. And thus we kept meeting and blushing, and sighing at times, and looking with tender regard, whilst with rare exceptions the word love never escaped from our lips. My heart, though I knew it not, was yearning for the accomplishment of its dearest wish, and that was to be beloved by one worthy of my esteem, as well as of my devotion. And thus had many a young love-dream come and tormented me, and had passed like the rest, when the long nights of winter having come, I won a few kisses in playing at forfeits, or I was emboldened to a word or two in playing at Hide-and-seek, or at Blindman's Buff. Then winter was over, days lengthened, and spring approached, when, one evening in February, we were all sitting round the fire at my uncle's, having our bagging, and a girl who lived at the next house, trying to open the door to go home, found it jammed fast by something which stuck at the bottom. She pulled it out and gave it to my aunt, and on its being opened before us all, great was our astonishment at beholding a valentine displayed. There were Cupids, and darts, and bars of love, and birds and chains, and bleeding hearts, all cut out, and coloured, and set forth in most

approved form. There were also lines of writing all around, and several verses and couplets in the middle. After a few minutes spent in admiration of the pretty missive, there was a general request to have it read, and I must own that I felt a mischievous glee in the idea that it would be found to be meant either for my bashful cousin Thomas or his sister Hannah, at whose expense, in particular, I was wishful to have a laugh. At length, after my uncle and aunt had examined the ornaments, it was handed over to Thomas to read, who began by reading the direction, which was, "To Mr. Samuel Taylor, at Mr. W. Taylor's," whereupon there was a general laugh at me, which I met by observing that the letter could not be meant for me, since my name was not Taylor but Bamford, and it was evidently intended for some person of the name of Taylor, and that Thomas was most likely to be that person. But when Thomas began to read the document itself—which he did with evidently mischievous glee—I was covered with confusion, and knew not where or how to look. "Read it; read it," was the general cry; and so he read a number of rhymes, and verses, and complimentary scraps, which removed every doubt as to the valentine being intended for myself and no one else. In the commencement I was addressed "My dear Samuel," then I was described as "tall and straight as a poplar-tree," next informed that—

"The rose is red, the violet blue,  
The pink is sweet, love, so are you,"

and that—

"As sure as grapes grow on the vine,  
I'm your true love and Valentine,"

each sentence or couplet being followed by a laugh from the youngsters. My uncle enjoyed the scene in his own quiet placid way, whilst my aunt affected to view the affair in a very grave light. The paper was handed from one to another, in order that they might identify the writing, and they all mentioned some person whose writing it was like; at length, after much hesitation, I was allowed to examine the missive, and as soon as my eye rested on the heading, I was almost

satisfied with respect to the person who had written it, but I kept my opinion to myself.

"Well," said my aunt, taking an extra pinch of snuff, "it's come to summut, at ony rate, 'at one conno' sit deawn to one's meat i' one's own heawse, but we munbi haunted wi' yung snickits comin' after thee, an' stickin' ther letters under th' dur. But I'll get to know hooas writ'n it, gentlemon. Thy feyther shall see this; heest know heaw theawrt carryin' on; he shanna be kept i' th' dark; it's none reet 'at he shudbe."

I protested that I knew nothing whatever of its coming. I could not prevent its being put under the door, and as for the writing none of them knew whose it was.

"But we win know," replied my aunt, still bent on tormenting me, though she could scarcely conceal the amusement she derived from my embarrassment, "we win know. This papper shall be sent deawn to th' skoo, an' laid afore th' mesters, an' th' writin' shall be compar't wi' some o' th' copy books, an' th' writer will then be fund eawt, an' yo' shan bwoth be browt an' set ov a form, one aside o' th' tother."

The very idea made my heart sink within me, for I was sure if the writing was produced at school, and the copy books examined, the writer would be detected, and I was more concerned by the thought of the writer being exposed than I was by any care for myself. Instead, therefore, of being gratified and elevated by the compliment which had been given to me, I was both humiliated and unhappy, and I passed many hours in no enviable frame of mind. The day following I asked my aunt to give the valentine up to me, but she refused, and persisted in saying my father should see it, and it should be produced at the Sunday school. I therefore determined to gain possession of it by any means I could devise, and accordingly I stole up to her chamber one forenoon, and found it in a pocket-book under her pillow, and after having minutely conned it over, I destroyed it, and thus put an end to all talk—whether feigned or in earnest—about its exposure in other places. My aunt was now really displeased, and threatened me with my father's severest reprehension; but I was never better satisfied with anything I had done, inasmuch as I had



secured the writer—whoever she might be—from the possibility of any annoyance in future, on that account. In a short time I expressed an intimation to Mima that I deemed her to be the writer, but she denied it with seeming displeasure, and I knew not then what to think about the authorship; and thus the occurrence was no more spoken about.

Let no one despise simple incidents like these. They are the ruffings which mark human existence—the joys and anxieties—the lights and shadows—of which humble life is composed.

In consequence of the great dearth of corn which marked the year 1800,\* my uncle's family had to suffer in manner and degree with the rest of their poor neighbours. We dealt with one of the best provision shops in Middleton, but the meal which we got for our porridge was very often not fit for food, whilst flour for dumplings or pies was out of all question. Our bread was generally made from barley, and tough, hard, dark-coloured stuff it was. Instead of wheaten flour, we had a kind of mixture which was nicknamed "ran-dan," or "brown George," and sad rubbish George proved to be; but all was welcome, nothing was refused by us hungry lads, whose only care was to get enough. Oaten cake, though made from meal which was enormously adulterated, was so much a dainty that we often took an opportunity for putting a piece of it out of sight, as a delectable snack to be eaten at leisure.

The pinching "barley-times" were over, and flour was selling at sixpence the pound, meal at fourpence, and potatoes at a guinea a load. Yet such was the profusion of work and the price of labour during the short peace of 1802,† that plenty was in every man's buttry. Common seven-eights calico, twenty-eight yards in length, was woven at ten shillings and sixpence the cut. A young soldier who came over on a two months' furlough, immediately set to the loom, and worked with extraordinary quickness and perseverance: when his fur-

\* The average price of wheat in 1800 was 110s. 5d. per quarter. It rose to 115s. 11d. in 1801, and fell to 67s. 9d. in 1802.

† The peace of Amiens, March, 1802. War was declared again in May, 1803.

lough expired, he got it renewed, and again set to work, and when he returned to the regiment he took money with him which bought his discharge. But this prosperity was of short duration; wages receded as fast as they had advanced, and work became very scarce. War again raged fiercely, the nation was to be invaded by a French army from Boulogne, and the whole kingdom was bristling with volunteer bayonets, when one afternoon I was rather surprised by an intimation that my uncle and a neighbour were going to look at the canal at Slat-tocks, and that myself and cousin Thomas might go with them if we chose. We went, pleased enough of course, but I soon lost my company, and returning home, found the town people all out of doors with fife and drum, and the constables parading for volunteers. I immediately offered myself, and was rejected on account of my stature. But Long Tom, an old campaigner, insisted on having me; he said I was a straight thriving lad, and would make a fine soldier, and so at last I was accepted, though the lowest of any in the ranks, and I got a shilling bounty, a billet whereat to spend my shilling, and a black and red cockade. On being dismissed for the night I went home, and had to encounter another lecture from my aunt, who said it was the first time a cockade had ever been worn by one of their family, and that I was in the way to perdition. I bore her reflections very philosophically, consoling myself with the assurance that I had only performed a duty to my country, and as the corps were never called on—not even to parade—I got through that great “act of sin,” as my aunt was pleased to designate my volunteering.

Meanwhile, on fine moonlight nights we enjoyed our wild and mirthful games out of doors, laughing until the echoes came back with laugh as gleesome as our own. Latterly we had also been sometimes joined at our play by one or two of our maiden acquaintance, who lived at a distance, and whom, as a matter of decent attention, I felt obliged to accompany part of the way home, taking many pleasant walks

“By heather brown and meadow green,”

which I was rather pleased to perceive was not at all agreeable

to others who, until now, I had deemed almost indifferent to anything which concerned me. I certainly had many compunctions of conscience ; I thought, as my aunt said, that I was getting on very fast in sin, and that if I did not turn over another leaf of life, I should become quite abandoned.

But deeper involvements soon followed from a persuasion which about this time took possession of me, and that was, that I was far from being indifferent in the estimation of my fair friend Mima. I remarked that whenever I went into a place where she was one of the company, she was the first to make room for me and offer me a seat ; that she always contrived to be near to me, and to be my partner in play ; that she always seemed pleased whenever I made my appearance ; pleased when I won at marbles or at any other game ; and latterly I had to thank her in my heart for a very agreeable instance of her regard and solicitude when almost unheeded by others as I sat ill in the nook. The kind inquiries, the concern for my pain, the tender expression of her countenance beaming at once with pity and beauty, more beautiful from its goodness, could not fail to make an impression in which love was born of gratitude, an impression which I neither strove to conceal from myself nor to resist, since I now found that besides her rare personal charms, she had, what was in my estimation a still brighter charm, in the tenderness of her innocent and devoted heart.

A young lad, a companion of mine, being deeply enamoured of a coy lass who lived at Throstle Nest, he took the expedient of inditing love epistles, in order to interest her indifferent feelings towards his suit. In these occupations I frequently assisted, and gave my advice, as well as accompanied him in his night excursions, when he went to peep at her window, or to deposit his love billets. I also confided to him the secret of my attachment, and, when the season came round, we frequently sat down at his parents' house, after working hours, and penned letters and valentines to our several fair ones, and sometimes also, by way of joke, to others of our female acquaintance. He was a neat writer, and an ingenious framer of such things, and under his tuition I soon became as good a



proficient as himself. I now set my ingenuity to task, and prepared a valentine the equal to which for painting, and gilding, and writing, and scissors work, had never probably been seen in Middleton, and this I gave with my own hand to Mima, when she came to play at my loom at night. I had seen too much of the chances of such things getting astray to entrust this precious offering to other conveyance than my own, I accordingly showed it to her first, and asked her opinion as to its merits, when, with admiration not unalloyed by a painful doubt, she inquired for what happy lass the beautiful thing could be intended? and I in a whisper said, "For you, if you can find in your heart to accept it for my sake, and as a sincere expression of my feelings." With joy in her look, and blushes lovelier than those of the queen flower of June, she said, "I do! I do!" and with a smile all modestly radiant, she placed it in her bosom, and went away.

So now we knew each other; we were united in heart, she was mine, and I was her own, but not one word of love escaped from our lips. Days and weeks and months passed, both of us happy in the assurance of mutual affection. I had no companionship with any of the other members of her uncle's family, and consequently I never went there except on an errand to the shop. She, however, being the confidante of my cousin Hannah, had a recognised privilege to come and go at our house without notice, and whenever she chose to do so, and seldom, indeed, a day passed, on which we were not favoured by a visit from the little Hebe, who would have a word of news for my old aunt, or a question to put to my uncle, or something to mention to Hannah, but who never went away until she had stood beside my loom, or tried to weave for me, or fetched me bobbins, or moved my rods, or spoken a word, or bestowed a modest glance, which said more than words could do. And thus we continued, thinking and looking unuttered things—heart united, soul blended, but never speaking of love, never daring to let that fearfully expressive word escape from our lips, never daring even to meet alone, when one day my aunt surprised and almost distressed me by the information that I was by my father's direction to depart that week and take up my abode in Manchester.



And as I am now about to quit this humble roof, and to launch on themes and scenes of a quite different description, it may not be out of place if I here introduce notices of a few scarce and original characters who were acquaintances of and visitors at my uncle's house, during my sojourn in his family.

One of the most singular of these was Richard Hall, a leader amongst the Kilhamite Methodists. Richard in his youth had been a most reckless fighter and drinker, the master and bully of the whole country side about Heywood, but having attended a preaching and a meeting or two of the Old Methodists, he was struck with remorse, became an altered man, and joined the society; and when the schism betwixt Mr. Kilham\* and the Conference took place, Richard went with the former, and ever afterwards adhered to that party. At the time I first knew him, he was a grave and venerable looking man, gracefully stooping, with thin dark locks, a very dark complexion, a temper surpassingly dogged and immovable, and withal a manner as humble, and a speech as mild as might have become the veriest lamb. Old Richard, however, I believe was as sincere a Christian as many who make more pretensions, but his modicum of grace had to act on a bodily temperament of no common order, and amongst other besetments thrown in his way by the "Evil One," no doubt, was an enormous liking of savoury viands, at whatever time of day, or in whatever manner he became cognisant of their proximity. Richard, however, was not selfish; he was generous of his humble store, and was at all times hospitable towards preachers or poor brethren who came about dispensing the Word in the neighbourhood. On one occasion he invited a preacher to partake his Sunday dinner, and the invitation was accepted with thanks. Meanwhile, the preacher was to preach, and Richard as his host accompanied him to the chapel, where a goodly array of hearers awaited them. Well, the prayer was made, the hymn was sung, the text was taken, and the preacher expounded to the great edification of those present. Richard, however, was thinking of other things: the old "Father of Sin," knowing his weakness, kept present-

\* Founder (1797) of the Methodist New Connexion.

ing to his imagination the nice stuffed duck which was roasting for dinner ; and such was Richard's anxiety to have it quite ready the moment the preacher returned, that he slipped out of the chapel and hastened home in order to make sure that no time should be lost. His wife, however, who was a little, expert, tidy woman, had the duck already cooked and the dinner waiting, and Richard, snuffing the delicious odour, thought there could be no great harm if he cut a slice and ate it, just to ascertain whether or not there was sage enough in the stuffing. So he took a little of the duck and most excellent it was ; then a little more, with some stuffing and apple sauce, and that was delicious. Then he thought that as the duck was ready, he might as well e'en make his dinner at once, and there would be enough left for the preacher when he came. So Richard kept cutting and eating, and cutting and eating, until, when the preacher returned, there was only the pickings of the bones left for him. Richard, now conscience struck, made the best apology he could, which, I believe, amounted partly to a confession of his besetting temptation, and partly to an opinion that his friend had gone to dinner with some other of the congregation. The preacher took all in good part, forgave his brother, advised him as to the future, and concluded with a word of prayer. Richard was greatly humbled, and more guarded for a time, but to the last years of his life, nothing gave him so great bodily satisfaction as "a nice savoury chop," or a "bit of a frizzle."

He was blessed with two daughters, as dutiful and affectionate children they were as ever ate bread from a parent's hand. They worked for and supported their old father and mother when they were unable to support themselves : they tended them in their age and their sickness, nursed them whilst they lived, and buried them with decency. One is still, I believe, toiling with the world only to keep sinking deeper in poverty ; the other met a sudden and dreadful fate. After having received such attentions as led her to expect marriage by a religious person, and having been abandoned by him, chiefly in consequence of the envious interference of other religious persons, she seemed to forget herself ; became less careful in

her attire, less guarded in her conversation, less cleanly in her habits, began to smoke tobacco, then to take liquors in small quantity, and at length, after a course of years, during which she abandoned every propriety save that of modesty, she was found one morning drowned in the mill-pond. If ever a young woman began life with a deservedness to be happy, this was the one ; but worth was rendered worthless, a body was ruined—degraded—a soul all but lost. Let humanity shed a tear for the fate of this poor unfortunate.

Once or twice a year, generally when days became short, and cloudy, and stormy, and we had long nights to sit by the fire ; at such a time of the year, and oftenest at the close of day, would the door of my uncle's house slowly open, and an old woman leaning on a stick, with her face half muffled, and her person concealed in an old brown cloak, and with sundry rags, bags, and pockets swaggering under her clothes, would enter. Instantly we knew her voice and made room for her to sit down, for "Old Ailse o' Bharla" was always a favourite at my uncle's fireside. She had plenty of tales, chiefly of an admonitory and religious turn ; she had "a remarkable gift of prayer," had also been "unfortunate in the disposal of her affection," was "rather out of her mind" as they said, and spent her time in wandering about from place to place, seeking rest, but finding none. Her father was a farmer of some property, residing in Birkle at about the year 1745, and Ailse used to take the week's butter to Bury every Saturday. At that time she was a smart, handsome, young woman, and happened to attract the attention of a young dragoon quartered at Bury, who was himself of respectable parentage, and bore a good character in the regiment. The soldier became deeply enamoured of the Birkle beauty, and lost not much time in making known to her the state of his heart. The very idea of being beloved by a common soldier, Alice looked upon as an insult, and she consequently treated his advances with contempt. The young man tried all means to induce her to lend a patient hearing to his supplication, but the high-notioned maid could not be prevailed on to listen. The lover was respected by many of the townspeople as well as by his com-



rades, and he engaged several of the former to interest themselves in the promotion of his suit, but all was in vain—the proud beauty would not listen. The youth remained hopeless, and in that forlorn state he marched with the regiment from Bury to Scotland. From thence he wrote several letters to friends in Bury, which described in touching language the strength of his hopeless love and the deplorable state of his mind, and probably some passages at least of these letters would find their way to the damsel's ear. Whether, however, it was from something which she heard at Bury, or from some reproaches of conscience, or from "some dream or vision," or some "apparition," or "love spell"—for she seldom would converse on the subject even with her most confident friends—she suddenly became violently desirous to see the young soldier, and to make amends for the slight and neglect she had practised towards him. She procured a horse and money, and travelled to Scotland, to the town in which she knew he was quartered. She entered the place, and as she and her steed, all weary and travel-worn, went slowly up the street, the sound of a trumpet playing a mournful air attracted her notice, and soon after she met a soldier's funeral procession. She stopped her horse to allow a free passage; several of the troopers gazed on her intensely and began to converse; at length she noticed one whom she remembered having seen at Bury, and him she took the liberty of asking where she should find her lover, when the man, pointing to the bier, said that was his quarters, and the only place where he was then to be found. She fainted, and would have fallen from her horse; the procession halted; the soldiers collected around her; they knew her; they pronounced her name. She was taken care of whilst the funeral was completed. After some time she returned home—an altered woman—a faded rose,—lost in heart—lost in mind—a dream interpreter—a spell solver—a religious monomaniac—an object of pity and in some degree of dread to all who knew her. Such was the tale of "Old Ailse o' Bharla."



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### HOPE STILL DEFERRED—NEW EMPLOYMENTS—NEW BOOKS.

ON leaving Middleton I went to live with my sister in Greengate, Salford, and attended once more the school of my father's old Methodist friend, John Holt, of Oldham Street, with a view to my improvement in writing and arithmetic, but my day for learning was gone by, and I took quite as much notice of certain pretty figures which sat in the girl's room opposite to me as I did of those in my book, and so I got not much improvement this time. Mima, however, was not forgotten. I had written to my cousin Thomas informing him of my situation, and in a postscript desiring him to remember me kindly to J. S., but the letter fell into my aunt's hands, and our secret was discovered. To add to my chagrin also, when I went to Middleton Mima was nowhere to be seen, having gone on a visit to Liverpool, so that instead of some faint chance of an interview which I had ventured to hope for, I got nothing save sly jokes and inuendoes about my love for J. S., and I returned home sadly disappointed.

But the time for confirmation arrived, and I, with many thousands of other young folks belonging to Manchester, received the bishop's blessing in the old church. It was with us a matter of some anxiety whether the right hand or the left of the venerable prelate should be placed on our heads, and it was my good fortune to receive the pressure of his right hand, which was considered a propitious omen. The day following the youth from the country districts were to be similarly admitted to Christian communion, and as I knew

that Mima would be with the Middleton party, I was in the churchyard at an early hour, waiting with an anxiety which made me indifferent to every other object. First one group appeared, then another came up the Mill Gate, and many of my old schoolfellows and playmates were amongst them; but the right one—the little cherry-blushing maid, with her light auburn hair, and bright looks, and pale-blue frock, and straw bonnet—was nowhere to be seen, and it was not until I had waited and looked, and gazed down the narrow, crooked street, and scrutinised each party as they approached—my sight becoming weary and my heart almost sick—that I at length caught a glimpse of one amid a group of maidens who I thought must be she whose coming I had so anxiously sought for. Another glance, less rapid than the omen of my own heart, told me that I was not mistaken, and the next moment our hands met, and heart-throbbing, agitated, and happy, our only words were mutual inquiries, confused and almost incoherent. My cousin Hannah, I found, was her companion, and though I was always rather partial towards Hannah, in good truth, I would she had at that time been in any other place. She was, however, there, and I could not do less than behave respectfully towards her; it would have been unkind not to have done so, a proceeding which, when a female was in the case, was not to be thought of by me, was not in my nature. And so, after the communion was over, we three formed one company, and, after taking refreshment, spent some time in looking through the wondrous old College, and in viewing the shops in the square, and the toy-stalls in the Smithy Door, where I made each of them a present of a breast-pin with an initial, not all gold of a certainty, but as highly prized as if it had been so, and had come from other hands. When the time of departure arrived, I accompanied them a good distance on the way home, in the hope that some accident would occur which might detach my cousin and give me an opportunity of uttering but one word to my enslaver, and of receiving her assurance of affection in return, for of that I felt not the least doubt; but our attendant never left us for an instant, and I, though again sorely disappointed, made up my mind to remain

as contented as I could, with the expression of kind looks, and one tender pressure of her dear hand only. And so, "hoping soon to meet again," we parted, that hope being destined not to be entirely realised.

I was shortly afterwards placed in the warehouse of Mr. Spencer, counterpane and bed-quilt manufacturer, whose rooms were at the bottom of Cannon Street. I was Mr. Spencer's only warehouseman, and my duties were to sweep the rooms, to light the fire, to dust the counters, and to fodder my master's horse, which was housed in a small stable in the yard. I also gave out goods, and took them in from the bleachers when my employer was absent, and on like occasions when a buyer came round it was my duty to show the goods and to sell them if I could. I was thus become a person of some responsibility all at once, and the estimation which I attached to my situation was not of the most humble degree. My wages were certainly rather of the lowest, being—if I recollect aright—about six shillings a week, but as my work was light and I was learning, as it were, the warehouse business, my wages were considered reasonable for the time being. My hours of attendance were from eight in the morning to six in the afternoon in summer, and to five in winter, with an hour at noon for dinner. My master resided somewhere near Levenshulme; he was punctual in his attendance in the morning and his departure in the afternoon. He was an exact and economical man, though not a severe master; he liked to have things done at a proper time, and to find every piece, and book, and paper, and wrapper, and string in its proper place; and as I was active and obliging and also took some pride in having the rooms neat, and the stock in order, I did not often incur his censure. His temperate and economical habits led him, as I understood, generally to dine on his return home; sometimes he would lunch in town, and occasionally he would send me to the Cockpit Hill for a fourpenny veal pie, which he took in the warehouse as a lunch. I liked my master very well, notwithstanding his careful habits and his rather distant manners; I liked his horse, however, better, when he and I had become acquainted. He was one of that useful sort which can work either in a cart



or trot under a saddle, and was very docile—only, if there had been more riding for me and less rubbing, I should have liked our acquaintance still better.

After being in the employ of Mr. Spencer some considerable time, I got a situation, at the advanced wages of eight shillings a week, in the warehouse of Mr. Thomas Robinson, of Hodson's Square, whose residence was at Walshaw Lane, near Bury, and who carried on a manufactory there of dimities and quiltings. He also had an agent who made calicoes for him at New Church, in Pendle Forest; Mr. Robinson's town agent or salesman in Hodson's Square was a young man named W., who had lately entered into Mr. Robinson's employment from that of his uncle, a draper, of Melton Mowbray. My warehouse duties here were much the same as at my former place, only I had not a horse to attend upon, as Mr. Robinson, when he came to town on Tuesdays and Saturdays, put up at The Dangerous Corner Inn, and left his nag there to be hostled. My work was, however, much more laborious than at Mr. Spencer's, and consisted chiefly in carrying goods up and down the stairs, in taking rather heavy parcels out to buyers in the town, and in packing up for country delivery.

I cared little, however, about the weight of the work which I was called on to perform, for being an active, clear-winded lad, I was seldom really tired; but one piece of drudgery which Mr. W. set me to do galled my feelings very much, and more so because I neither deemed the manner in which I was made to perform it necessary, nor the performance itself at all within the intention of my contract with my employer. Mr. W., as was quite excusable in a young man of his condition, affected great smartness in his dress, and had his mind been as well cultivated as his person was draped, he would have been a very intelligent gentleman indeed; but his manners, pronunciation, and in fact every action and tone, betrayed the rustic provincialist just come to the great mart of trade with but one wish, one idea, that of gain, gain, gain. I, young and inexperienced, and ignorant of the world as I was, could not fail to draw comparisons betwixt my employer, the plain, unaffected, but perfectly well-bred, well-informed man, and the



young country buck whom he had selected to do his business. Both of them wore top-boots, and as Mr. W. would have his perfectly clean, he initiated me into the mysteries of making excellent blacking and boot-top liquid, and then installed me in the honourable office of shoeblack and boot-cleaner to himself. I felt this to be an encroachment on my condition of service, but as I never imagined that Mr. W. would do less than make me a handsome present when I became expert at the job, I did my best to please him. Weeks and months, however, passed, Mr. W. having the distinction of sporting the cleanest and best polished boots in the town; but not one word did he ever utter having the remotest allusion to remuneration. Sometimes when he put them on and turned round his foot to see how smart they looked, he would, in one of his pleasantest moods, say, "Sam, thaw has done these very well," or, "Sam, thaw has made these tops very nyst; they almost look as well as new;" but never did my observant eye detect his hand gliding into his pocket for a sixpence or a shilling to give me for my trouble. And so when one morning he ordered me to carry a slop-basin full of milk—for top-liquid—from his lodgings in Salford to the warehouse, I refused, and told him, once for all, I would neither clean tops nor black bottoms any more. He looked a moment at me aghast and horrified by my audacious rebellion, but finding me neither abashed nor tractable, he only intimated that Mr. Robinson would have to be informed of my insubordination. I, however, never heard anything further respecting the matter, and probably Mr. Robinson was never made aware of the extra drudgery I had performed.

About this time I was delighted by the acquisition of two books, the existence of which, until then, had been unknown to me. One was the second volume of Homer's *Iliad*, translated by Alexander Pope, with notes by Madame Dacier, and the other was a small volume of *Miscellaneous Poems*, by John Milton. Homer I read with an absorbed attention which soon enabled me to commit nearly every line to memory. The perusal created in me a profound admiration of the old heathen heroes, and a strong desire to explore the whole of "The tale

of Troy divine." To the deep melancholy of the concluding lines I fully responded.

"Be this the song, slow moving tow'rd the shore,  
Hector is dead, and Ilion is no more."

With Milton I was both saddened and delighted. His "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" were but the expressions of thoughts and feelings which my romantic imagination had not unfrequently led me to indulge, but which, until now, I had deemed beyond all human utterance.

"Some time walking not unseen  
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,  
Right against the eastern gate,  
Where the great Sun begins his state,  
Rob'd in flames, and amber light,  
The clouds in thousand liveries dight.

\* \* \* \*

Meadows trim with daisies pied,  
Shallow brooks and rivers wide:  
Towers and battlements it sees  
Bosom'd high in tufted trees,  
Where perhaps some beauty lies,  
The Cynosure of neighb'ring eyes,"

were the very whisperings of the spirit ever present in my day musings, and which brooded over my night dreams. Then again in "Penseroso" the line—

"Call up him who left half told,"

set my imaginative curiosity to work. What him? who was "him?" when did he live? where did he reside? and how happened it that he

"left half told  
The story of Cambuscan bold?"

What a strangely interesting subject for thoughtful conjecture was his "story half told," with its Cambuscan, and Algarsife, and Canace, who, whether or not she was ever wived at all, was a mystery impenetrable to me. "Samson Agonistes" and

"Paradise Regained" were less attractive than were others of the great bard's miscellaneous productions. His night witchery of "Comus" was the very revel of poetry,

"The star that bids the shepherd fold,  
Now the top of Heaven doth hold,"

for instance, and

"Braid your locks with rosy twine,  
Dropping odours, dropping wine,"

conveyed to my heart and my imagination ideas almost as fascinating and dangerous as the spell which bound the fair lady in her "marble venom'd seat," while the concluding lines of the mournfully quaint "Lycidas" inspired me with those pleasing anticipations which are always awaiting the behest of healthful, active youth.

"Thus sang the uncouth swain to th' oaks and rills,  
While the still morn went out with sandals gray,  
He touch'd the tender stops of various quills,  
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay :  
And now the sun had stretch'd out all the hills,  
And now was dropt into the western bay ;  
At last he rose, and twitch'd his mantle blue :  
To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new."

Oh! John Milton! John Milton! of all the poetry ever read or ever heard recited by me, none has so fully spoken out the whole feelings of my heart—the whole scope of my imaginings—as have certain passages of thy divine minstrelsy.

## CHAPTER XIX.

“Why should unavailing love  
Be kept like hidden gold?”

NEVER, probably, were the reveries of love and poetry more deeply indulged in than they were by me in these my young days of visionary romance. My warehouse work was certainly a laborious reality, but what then? I was more than equal to any fatigue which I had to encounter. I performed all I had to do cheerfully, readily, and thoroughly, and the hours flew swiftly, if not altogether pleasantly, whilst my deepest thoughts were engaged in far other scenes, and the objects constantly occurring to my mental perception were of a quite different nature. Very often, whilst bending beneath a load of piece goods, as I carried them through the crowded streets, or wiping the sweat from my brow as I rested in the noon sun, would I be unconsciously wandering in imagination in the free forest glades with Robin Hood, or

“Over some wide water’d shore,”

with Milton. Then, in such a place as Manchester, where beauty adorned by graceful art appeared at each step, I frequently encountered objects which led my thoughts far astray; and not only was the hardship of my situation forgotten, but, the present overcoming the distant, she to whom I had silently vowed my true and loyal troth, was too often absent from my meditations.

My chief companions at this time were a lad of about my own age named Booth, who was serving an apprenticeship to



the business of a letter-press printer, and a young warehouseman named Fielding. After working hours we used frequently in summer time to take our rambles in Broughton, and one of our favourite spots was a piece of rough-broken ground lying on the left of the first ascent of Stony Knows, and known by the name of The Woodlands. Here were various out-of-the-way footpaths, round green hillocks, and through winding dells and hollows, with natural arbours of hazel and wild-rose, and quaint cell-looking little nooks to sit in, where either in the warm sun or in the shade, we could choose our seat; either in the breeze or under the wind that ruffled the gnarled oak, and brushed the grey birch, and swept through the boughs of the red-berried rowan, for such were the only woods remaining, could we lie down, or sit up, or read poetry or romance, or sing, or laugh, or talk over our own little love affairs or those of others. Pleasant Sunday rambles were these, on cool dewy mornings, or on fine sunny afternoons, and vastly did we young joking, laughter-loving frolickers enjoy whatever was enjoyable in our own simple, humble way—from a scramble which should pluck a dog-rose, to a race which should first win the smile of a milkmaid and purchase the warm cream from her can.

On one of these occasions, I and a companion were taking this very pleasant round, and wishing that some beautiful apples, which hung on the other side of the hedge, were ours, when thump went a fine one on my companion's back, and in a moment after I was very near being hit by another. We gathered the fruit and laughed heartily, being greatly pleased with the joke, but were puzzled in what terms to thank the donor, whose person remained beyond our ken. "Who's thrown 'em?" asked one. "What's thrown 'em?" asked the other. "Well, but mine's a good un," said the first taster; "An' mine's as good," said the second. "Thank the thrower, whoever threw 'em," said the first speaker; "Aye, an' twenty times o'er were the thrower but a bonny lass," said the second. "If she be a bonny lass, and she's as good as she's bonny, she'll perhaps throw another," said the first speaker; "I shouldn't wonder," said the second. And

with that two more apples were thrown, and we heard a laugh and just caught a glimpse of a fair young maiden hastening from the orchard and crouching beneath the apple trees. Quick, however, as was her disappearance, it was not so quick but I knew her to be the sister of one whom I had seen in the town, and who had recently come in for a very considerable share of my deepest considerations. She whom we had seen was indeed a bonny lass, as fair as alabaster, and with locks as dark as those of an "Ethiope queen," whilst the one who had disturbed my equanimity was older, taller, and bore in her manner and her features an expression of sedate and comely beauty, the impression of which I in vain tried to efface. To my poetic fancy she seemed a near personification of Milton's "Nun"—

"devout and pure,  
Sober, steadfast, and demure;  
With sable stole of Cyprus lawn,  
Over her decent shoulders drawn;"

whilst the sable stole which she wore, being in mourning, was truly befitting her grave and modest demeanour.

After I had been in Mr. Robinson's employ a considerable time, he removed from Walshaw to Bent House, in Prestwich. Here he had a small farm attached to his holding, and when they were busy in the hay, at his request, I willingly went over to help them during a week: In some time after he disagreed with his farming man, and he then wished me to go to Bent House and undertake the man's work. I hardly relished this; I was not satisfied of my ability to do the work as it should be done. I liked my master, however, very well, and his lady, and their little daughter "Mittey," as we used to call her, when I carried her in my arms during the hay season; and as it was a pleasure for me to do anything which pleased my master, considering also that it was my duty to do so in every lawful thing, I consented, for a time, to resign Manchester and its attractions, and so take up my abode at Prestwich. I set about doing my work in the best manner I could, and as "where there is

a will, there is a way," I was not long in becoming tolerably handy about my business. I had some notion how to clean a horse before, and I soon learned how to bed my master's neat tit down, and to rub the bits and stirrups, and sponge the saddle, and bridle, and girths. In the shippoon I was equally active, except at milking, which was done by one of the women. Knife cleaning I had to learn, but that was easily done, whilst in the business of boot-and-shoe polishing, the instructions which Mr. W. had conferred on me came just to hand, as if this predicament had been foreseen. Martha, the cook, a woman of mature age, was very kind to me, for I was generally cheerful and in good temper, and whenever she had to go anywhere after darkness set in, being afraid of "spirits," I had to go with her. The other cook, who came after Martha left, was kind also ; so that I thought cooks were the best creatures in the world. Nancy, the nurse, got blamed, poor girl, for coming about the stable ; whilst Sarah, the housemaid, a plain-looking, careful Yorkshire lass, soon left, and her place was supplied by Mary H., the daughter of a cottager residing close by, as thoroughly innocent and sweet-looking a damsel was Mary as ever stepped in England. My mistress got me to clean the plate, and next she wanted me to wait at the table ; but that was a thing I could never take up. I was thinking of far other things, and always making some blunder, and at last Mary had to do it instead of me. I had soon plenty of acquaintance in this new place ; there was Robert B., who courted Mary, and young Tummus C., who trailed the wing after Nancy. Then there were milk customers from Rooden Lane, and last, though not least to be thought upon, Old Wilde the farmer, whose daughter Mary always welcomed me to a seat by the fire. My mistress, though I could not please her in all things, was a very kind and considerate lady towards me. When I was attacked by a severe quinsy she attended me herself, blistered my throat, dressed the blister, prepared a gargle, and saw that I used it ; in short, she did for me what none of my fellow servants



could or would do, and she had the satisfaction of receiving my grateful thanks after a short but severe crisis. My master and mistress were both young people, and a handsome couple they made, and with their two little ones, they presented a group the like of which is but seldom found in this world's scene. My mistress was very orderly in her family arrangements, whilst my master was a steady man of business, though not always fortunate. He made no parade of religion, but read prayers before the whole family every Sunday night.

On one occasion my master and mistress went on a visit, during a week or so, leaving myself, the cook, and the housemaid at home. One night the subject of fortune-telling was talked about as we sat on the hearth, and it was agreed that on the very next night I should accompany the women to a famous seer of that description, known by the name of "Limping Billy," who lived at Radcliffe Bridge. The thing was to be quite secret, and so we got Mary Wilde and another woman to keep house whilst we were away, telling them, what indeed was true, that we were going over to Besses-o'th'-Barn, and would soon return. So away we went on foot, and through Besses-o'th'-Barn, and over the top of Pilkington to Radcliffe, where we found the old conjurer domiciled up some steps in a back yard. According to arrangement, the women entered the place at once, whilst I retired to get a cup of ale at a publichouse. So I waited here some time, and when I supposed the secrets of futurity had been unveiled, I mounted the steps, and without much ceremony opened the door and entered the room. If my recollection deceive me not, the apartment was a dimly lighted, roomy place, with a close musty smell. Opposite the door stood a plain uncurtained bedstead, containing what appeared to be a bed, the colour of dirty sacking. A table with some spoons and basins stood propped against the further wall, an old oaken chair occupied a dark corner, a miserable-looking fire glimmered in the grate, beside which, with his knees almost up to his chin, seated behind a dirty, sloppy



table, with a single candle burning, or rather flickering, appeared the wizard. My two companions sat with their backs towards me, and he with his bony fingers, taloned with long black nails, kept turning round and peering into a tea-cup, mumbling all the time words the meaning of which I could not comprehend.

"Hooas theer?" said he, suddenly looking up and gazing full at me with a malicious and angry grin.

"It's only me," I replied.

"Hooa arto," shouted the conjurer, "an' wot dusto want?"

"I'm waitin' o' these two young women," I replied.

"Then goo an' wait sumweer elze," he said, in a still angry tone, "an' when they want'n the, they'n know wheer to find the."

"Oh, it's only the lad 'at's comn wi' us," said one of the young women.

"He may as weel wawk off at once," said the seer, "I'll do no bizniz while he's i'th' place."

"Hee'l happen hav' his fortin towld," said the other girl.

"Hee'l ha' no fortin towld heer to-neet," said the conjurer.

"An' if it comes to that, I care no great deal either for you or your fortin," I said, pretty well satisfied with what I had observed, and coming out of the place.

More mortified than disappointed, I awaited the arrival of the women in the street, when we adjourned to the public-house, and whilst there partaking a glass of warm liquor, they told me that old Billy had caught me laughing, and was very angry at my daring to laugh in his presence. I admitted that I certainly had been betrayed into a not very reverential feeling when I saw them listening so demurely whilst the old impostor peered into his dirty cup and mumbled his prognostics. Nor, as I learned from various hints, was the result of their inquiry such as they had hoped it would be. One of them could not hear anything whatever respecting a particular "old sweetheart," whose coming she had awaited during years, but who never came; whilst the other, whose cheeks were burning, and ears almost

cracking, to be assigned to a certain "young man of a fresh complexion and light hair," was inexorably awarded, so said the cup, to one rather aged, stooping, and dark haired. Neither of them, I found, was satisfied, and in order to dispel their evil bodings, I ridiculed old Bill and his trade until they joined me in laughing at their adventure as well as my own, and so in this lively mood we set off towards home, and arrived there better pleased with ourselves and our journey than we had at one time expected to be. I may mention, that in the end, the one got married to her "old sweetheart," and the other to her "fresh complexioned" young fellow. Whilst I was very near being a prophet, old Billy proved an impostor, and the mirth of our home walk was the wisest part of the whole affair.

One day when returning from Manchester, I was overtaken in going up the Red Bank, by a heavy storm of wind and rain, and seeing before me an old woman muffled in her cloak, well, thought I, the old creature shall, at any rate, have a share of my umbrella, if she will. So I walked up beside her and said, "Good mother, come and take shelter under this covering of mine," and I stepped short that she might come under, when at that moment looking up, she displayed a countenance the very type of angelic loveliness, so youthful, so abashed, so gentle, so innocent, and withal so serious, that I blamed myself for having accosted her in that abrupt manner, though with the best of intentions.

"Lord, save us!" at length said I, "that I should have taken such an one as thee for an old woman!" For as a country lad, I was in the habit of theeing and thouing my equals in years and condition.

"You shouldn't try your jokes on strangers," she replied, with a look of reproof, and pausing in her gait that I might pass on.

"If there be truth in human words," I said seriously, "I could not attempt to jest with thee."

"Why not?" she inquired, "you seem rather apt at the thing."

"Indeed I do often jest, like others of my condition, but if

thou will believe me, I could not do so whilst looking on a face like thine."

"How then could you pretend to have taken me for an old woman?"

"I had not then marked thy bonny look, and the wind and the rain had caused thy cloak to be so muffled, hood over bonnet, that thou wert in a close guise. Besides, speaking truly, I did think thou walked somewhat wearily up this hill; and I felt moved, for my own mother has travelled this road in many a storm; and I thought this is also somebody's mother, sure enough." And then, when the fair being saw that I was moved, she gave a pardoning look, and said:

"Well! since you do not intend to banter me, I will confess I did walk slowly, for I have a pain here," pressing her hand on her left side.

"If, then, when thinking thou wert aged, I hastened to show thee kindness, surely now I find thee to be young, and passing fair also, I may be allowed to show thee respect. See how the rain again pours, and how the wind blows, and how the leaves are swept from the hedges. Trust me, lass, and walk on this quiet side, and I'll break the storm, never fear."

And so I kept my stout umbrella to the wind, and she walked by my side, her golden hair scarcely ruffled by the wind. And when there came a flash and an astounding roar of thunder, she stopped, trembled, and looked imploringly, and I drew her arm over mine, saying, "Trust God, and fear not. He who hurls the bolt can avert the blow."

Such was my first meeting, and such nearly the terms of my first conversation, with my beautiful Catherine—the daughter of a widow who kept a small farm in Crumpsall.

The thunder soon rolled at a distance, the rain began to abate, the wind almost ceased, still, arm in arm, we proceeded until we arrived at the top of Smedley Lane, where there were stumps leading to a footpath across the meadows, and here we parted, but not before an appointment had been made for a second meeting.

Often we met again, and took lonely walks in those pleasant undulating pastures, and when her mother came to know

about our meetings, she said no one should marry her daughter who could not fetch her away on his own horse. And thereat I felt abashed, I thought I was sure enough presumptuous, and that I had not any right to stand in the way of the old mother's expectations on behalf of her daughter ; and so I said at one of our stolen interviews, "How shall this be, dear Catherine?" and she advised that for the present our meetings should be discontinued. "My mother will become more reconciled," she said, "and we shall become older, and better settled in the world ; meanwhile, let us not forget each other, but exchange tokens of affection, to be looked upon with kind remembrance when we are distant." And we exchanged love tokens ; and after a long interview, and many last words and turnings again, we parted, and I went to Prestwich very down-cast, and wishing I had a farm and a horse of my own, that I could make a home for my dear Catherine.



## CHAPTER XX.

### OTHER SCENES.

Soon after this my master gave up his manufacturing concern and removed to Manchester, and after a short stay there, he commenced business as a shipbroker at Liverpool, where I believe he died. On his leaving the Manchester trade, our late bookkeeper and salesman, Mr. W., began business himself, and I went with him as porter and warehouseman the same as before. Our establishment was removed to High Street, and we did much business in prints and calicoes, both grey and white: a cheap bargain of any kind had always a good chance of being taken up by my employer. Trade was now going very well, and vast sums of money were speedily realised by shrewd, active, and enterprising tradesmen, and of this class my employer was certainly one of the most remarkable.

I continued my poetic readings at all leisure moments. I procured and read speedily a complete Iliad in English. Some of Shakespeare's works having fallen in my way, I read them with avidity, as I did almost every other book, and though deeply interested by his historical characters and passages, I never either then or since relished his blank verse, or that of any other poet. I never, as it were, could get the knack of it; and as compared with rhymed poetry, it has always seemed to me, indeed,

“Like the fore'd gait of a shuffling nag.”

If any one wishes to see a play performed he has only to walk the streets of Manchester, or any other of our large

towns, and he may behold the perfection of either tragedy or comedy enacted by performers who need neither prompter, call-boy, nor rehearsal ; but all coming and going as regularly as if the piece were a play "got up" and "put on the stage," as the phrase is, "put on ready for representation." The scenes are admirably painted—the machinery perfect in its operations, of wonderful construction, and sometimes of most awful effect. The actors might have been made for the performance of their several parts, so aptly do they go through them ; whilst the dresses, decorations, and all the accessories of the piece, are sure to be wonderfully befitting. And with such a stage as this, with its ever-varying reality before our eyes, who can require sham repetition as an after-part ? Not I at any rate.

Milton's miscellaneous works were still my favourites. I copied many of his poems into a writing book, and this I did, not only on account of the pleasure which I felt in their repetition, and in the appropriation, so to speak, of the ideas, but also as a means for the improvement of my handwriting, which had continued to be very indifferent. The *Odyssey* and *Æneid*, which I also procured and read about this time, seemed tame and languid, whilst the stirring call of the old Iliadic battle trumpet was ringing in my ears, and vibrating within my heart. In short, I read or attentively conned over, every book I could buy or borrow, and as I retained a pretty clear idea of what I read, I became rather more than commonly proficient in book knowledge, considering that I was only a better sort of porter in a warehouse.

I was now a strong, active young fellow, fast rising into a man, with somewhat of a will and a way of my own ; and with a coolness of thought, and a steadfastness of purpose, increasing with my years, and strengthening with my strength. I had not yet become a beer drinker, but I could take my half pot of porter whilst at work on a hot day without feeling the effects of the liquor, and though I was not in the least quarrelsome, but on the contrary was given to good-humoured jocularity, I would as lief almost have had a battle on my hands, in a right cause, as have been without one ; and so in this line

I not unfrequently met with some rough amusement. I kept still, however, adhering to my simple habits and diet, working my work promptly, and perhaps zealously, and giving the remainder of my time to the reading of my favourite authors, to country strolls at eventide, or on Sundays, or to a good swim or two in season at Sandy Well or Broughton Ford, with my acquaintance. Seldom did my inclination or my connections lead me to the theatre. That sort of thing did not please me; there was too much of tinsel and clap-trap, too little of reality, of thorough natural freshness for my taste. And when I did go, I never came away without an impression which spoiled all the rest, that I had been witnessing a delusion. Neither my spare hours, therefore, nor my loose change were often spent at the play-house; my home-goings were consequently more early and regular than they otherwise might probably have been. I went to rest betime, and rose clear-headed, and with a strength and buoyancy of limb that mocked toil and weariness. My breakfast was generally a basin of milk, with a good thick slice round a loaf toasted and soaked in. My dinner I either took at the cook's shop at the corner of Brown Street, where the Commercial Hotel now is, or at the pie-house in Cockpit Hill, where in repay for my free and cheerful discourse with the old lady, and my gentle deference to the daughter, I was frequently offered the use of a plate and knife and fork, and those were favours not accorded to many. My supper would be bread and milk again. My bed was a very humble but cleanly one, in the upper room of a tall sombre-looking tenement occupied by one widow Pickup and her daughter—a little pale, prim, automatic, fastidious body, whose only solace now was in the artless prattle of her young unfathered child. The house was situated in a strangely isolated yard, bounded on all sides by a high wall, or by the back walls of other houses, and approachable only by a narrow covered passage closed by a door, and leading out of another long alley called Ditchfield Court, which latter place was accessible only by steps from that end of that quaint and antique old street called Long Mill Gate, which emerges in the open space, formerly known as The Apple Market, close to the Old Church.

From this part of the town, Strangeways, Broughton, and the Cheetham Hill road being the most ready outlets into the country, it not unfrequently happened that my steps almost involuntarily took the direction of the latter quarter, and that on many occasions when I merely purposed to stroll as far as Smedley or Cheetwood, I found myself lingering upon and retracing the footpaths on which Catherine and I had so often strayed. A feeling of profound but benignly soothing melancholy was at these times ever present, humbling my heart and straightway reassuring it—

“ Wounding as it were to cure,  
Strength’ning only to endure.”

On one of these occasions, when these sadly solacing communings, protracted until night, found me wandering like something lost, I was recalled to consciousness by the barking of a dog, and the flashing of a light, and the clapping to of a gate, through which I saw Catherine pass swiftly towards a dwelling at a short distance from the one she had left, which was her mother’s. I took my station under a hedge and awaited her return, and when she approached, I gave the same low whistle which she had often heard before, and she stopped, holding up the lanthorn, and exclaiming, “ Bless us, lad ! can that be you ? ” I came from my covert and convinced her it was myself, come I scarcely knew how or why, as I said, but hoping against despair that I might once more catch a glimpse of her dear form through the window, or hear her voice, or at least see some one of the family who I knew had seen her, and then I could return contented, “ Indeed,” she said, taking the hand which I extended, “ you are very kind ; but how cold you are—you have been out in the dew until you are wet and starved : wait a few minutes, and I will make an excuse to come out again ; I have something to tell you.” And with that she disappeared through the gate, and went into the house. She was as good as her word. In a short time I heard her well-known step, and went to meet her, and as I modestly embraced her, and expressed a thousand thanks for this token of her kindness and confidence, she bade



me hush, and leading me beneath some trees, said she believed me to be worthy of her confidence, even of her affection, or she should not have met me again, but that her stay must be short, and that this meeting would perhaps be our last as lovers.

It would be of little use were I to attempt to narrate the particulars of all that was said on that mournful occasion. The conversation of lovers is seldom interesting to any save themselves. I urged, I pleaded, I besought, I even reproached and again pleaded, with every persuasive which my unpractised but heart-bursting emotion could pour forth, in order to induce her to say that we should once more live for each other, but in vain. All she would promise was that this should not be our final parting, but that, whatever might be the consequence, she would meet me once more.

The simple-minded but tenacious girl made known to me, however, in the most kindly and confiding manner, the circumstances which had induced her thus unexpectedly to sacrifice our mutual happiness. She, like the girls at Prestwich, had been trying to look into futurity, and had given ear to the prophecies of an old fortune-telling woman, who said "it was not our fate to be united," "that if the connection was not broken off one of us would die," "that an evil star was in the table of our destiny," "that, in fact, if the acquaintance was continued, I should prove false in the end." "And so," added the distressed and almost terrified girl, "what must be, must be." "It is of no use striving against the decrees of Providence." "It is a great misfortune, but it might have been worse; we can still esteem each other, nay, love each other as dear friends, even meet each other as friends in passing through the world, and surely that will be enough. If we can each be certain of one true 'friend in need and indeed,' we shall be fortunate after all."

When I tried to reason her out of her delusion, she informed me that the old woman was "infallible," and that before she gave a final decision she always had access to the body of a lady which lay embalmed in one of the rooms of a certain great house which stood on the roadside leading to Manchester,

and that whatever she in consequence foretold, it was useless to attempt to evade.

And so, with one fond embrace, and mutual prayers that God would protect and bless us through life, we again parted, and I, with my heart somewhat consoled by the assurance of meeting her once more, returned to my quiet and solitary old domicile.

I now became moody and melancholy, brooding over my ill success in courtship, and wondering how it happened that love like mine should go unrequited. I felt piqued also, and my pride was wounded, that the fiat of an old woman should have had more influence than all my entreaties. In my intercourse with the fair sex, the emotions of the heart had hitherto been my only offering, and now the unworthy surmise first occurred that the offering had been too pure, that the heart and the imagination alone of man could not suffice for womankind, that the beings I had adored were not so entirely divine as my poetry had painted them, and that, if I would be really loved with a womanly love, mine must be of a less ethereal nature than it had hitherto been. This notion I found to be the confirmed opinion of some of my more experienced acquaintance, who laughed at my simplicity, and with this dangerous and debasing impression on my mind, I began to think there would be but little sin in my acting differently from what I had done. That persuasion had an immediate and injurious effect on my conduct, and the consequences soon followed.

I first set about ridding myself of the influence which every female, in whatsoever degree, had upon my feelings. I resolved to love them all alike, and never more to give to woman the power of inflicting pain such as I had endured. With the aid of pride, which I summoned to my assistance, and a strong resolve to be free, I flattered myself that I had accomplished this feat pretty soon, and I began to breathe with greater confidence. From all the female sex I had taken a distance, one was as near to me as another, and none were near enough to wound. I could gaze on beauteous woman without emotion; I could converse with her in terms of the coolest civility, whereas my heart-movings would in past times have em-

barrassed my utterance. I was no longer her slave ; and the only duty I thenceforward acknowledged as owing to her was to protect and please her, and in return, when so disposed, to accept of her endeavours to please. But never again was she to have my happiness at her disposal. So I became, as I thought, a free-and-easy young fellow, with few things to care about save the performance of my labour, the receipt of my wages, and the partaking of such amusements as my humble means afforded. A dangerous position was this for youth of my present turn of mind to occupy. My father, whom I frequently called to see, never failed to give me the best of advice, and I deferred to it for the moment, but seldom did its influence long remain after I had quitted his presence. To three points of his advice, however, I have, I hope, adhered through life, namely, to stand up for the right and fear not, to be inflexibly honest, to avoid all approach towards presumptuous assurance, and rather endeavour to be marked for solid worth.

Hitherto "fond and sinless love" had been my protection against many temptations, but now that was gone I found myself beset with inducements to vice which I had previously deemed not worth a thought. There was a void in my existence, and it required to be filled up by some means. Small tipples of ale became not unfrequent ; my company keeping was more promiscuous ; my conversation less modest ; and my deportment less reserved. Irreverent thoughts would obtrude whether at church or chapel, and those places became mere rendezvous, where this one might be seen, or that one might be found, or where an hour or two might be spent as at a theatre, in the show of fine clothes, and hearing the drone of tranquillising music. In short, I was fast ripening into a graceless young ruffian, loving no one as I could once have loved ; beloved by no one as I would have been beloved ; and preserving only so much of self-respect as guaranteed my integrity, and the performance of my duties to my employer.

But a new allurements now crossed my path, and had it not been that the instrument for trial was just the one it was, my demoralisation might have taken a decided and fearful course.



One night, as I was proceeding home, a woman of the town took hold of my arm, and desired me to go with her. I had never been so accosted before, and as she walked on with me the thoughts of being seen with such an one at my side covered my cheeks with burning shame. Confiding, however, in my own self-control, I took the dangerous resolve of hearing what she had to say, and of observing what she would do. I therefore suffered her to continue her conversation, and she led me into less frequented streets, and by back corners, where under the shroud of darkness her blandishments had well-nigh shaken my virtuous resolves. Something she said about "the sweet air of the country," when I asked her if she came from the country? and on her replying that she did, I questioned her as to where she came from, and did not my ears tingle, and my heart leap, when she said "from Middleton." "Ah!" I said, "I come from Middleton." "Did I?" what was my name then? I told her, when, uttering an exclamation of joyful surprise, she would have smothered me with caresses. I next questioned her as to her name, and seemingly incredulous, she asked me if I really did not know her? I assured her I did not, and she wept to think, as she said, that she should have carried me in her arms when I was an infant, and now that we should meet here and I did not know her. Who could she be? I again asked, and she mentioned a name at the hearing of which I almost sank to the earth. She had been born and brought up at the house next door to that of my parents; she was the beloved child of their early friends and associates; she married when I was but an infant, and her husband, when I could run about, used to make whip-cord, and kites, and banding to fly them with for me. I knew the man well at that time; he was still living, and it not unfrequently happened that I was in his company when I went over to Middleton. I was disgusted with myself and her. I shuddered at the sin which I had well-nigh committed, though she would have continued her blandishments, and even pressed me for an assignation at another time. But my soul revolted, and I got rid of her by paying for a glass of hot liquor at "The Dangerous Corner" publichouse. Dangerous indeed.



## CHAPTER XXI.

### OLD FEELINGS AWAKENED—A VISIT, AND OTHER MATTERS.

FORTUNATELY, however, for me, I was for the present somewhat recalled from this unsettled course of life by an incident which, though trifling in itself, gave a startling impulse to my dormant feelings. A young woman, an acquaintance of, and near neighbour to, Mima, my young Middleton favourite, accosted me one day in the streets of Manchester, and reproached me for having, as she said, forgotten the little maiden, who, she gave me to understand, still retained a tender remembrance of former days. Was that true? was it possible that she could cherish a kind recollection of one who had been so long absent? I asked. She said it was even as she had stated. This moved the old pulses of my heart, and awoke that tender feeling of regard which had been too long dormant. I entrusted the young woman with a kind message to Mima, confirming it with a small token which I thought would be acceptable, and I did not forget to make a present of a gay ribbon to the bearer of this un hoped-for but welcome information. I now resolved to see my fair agitator, at all events, and to learn from herself, frankly and promptly if possible, whether or not our former friendship was to be renewed, or abandoned at once and for ever. I therefore went to Middleton the Sunday following, and as Fortune I suppose was just at that time not in a humour for throwing impediments in my way, I obtained an interview with the object of my solicitude, and besides finding her as modest and bewitching as ever, the very model of a little head-bowed, health-flushed Hebe, a lily rose-tinted, I had the ineffable pleasure of

receiving in her own words, with every grace of maidenly shame, an acknowledgment that I had long been, and still was, regarded with a more than friendly interest by her. This was enough for the present, and after making arrangements whereby we might correspond by letter, I bade adieu to the dear little girl, and walked back to Manchester in a state of mind to which I had long been a stranger. I felt that in this transaction I had, in fact, only performed a duty; that my early love had after all the most rightful claim to my affection; that she was in every respect worthy of it; and that, in this instance as in many others, the performance of duty had been my guide to happiness. I was again as deeply in love as ever, only this time I was serenely contented; my confidence was greater, the void in my heart was filled, and I was happy.

I had been of opinion for some time, that my services to Mr. W. were worthy of an increased remuneration, and I mentioned the matter, but my employer could not be prevailed upon to adopt my views, and so after the expiration of a month's notice I left his service.

It was about this time that on going home one evening, I saw a young fellow beating a girl in the street.

"Hallo, you fellow," I said, "what are you abusing that girl for?"

"What's that to you?" said the blackguard.

"I'll let you see what it is to me if you lay a finger on her again."

"Oh, you will, will you," said he; "come on then."

So we set to, and in five minutes I beat him till he was dizzy and had enough. I then led the girl from the crowd, and as we were going she told me he had beaten her because she could not supply him with money for his night's revel. Was he her husband then? I asked. She said he was not, and gave me to understand that she was an unfortunate girl, and that he had latterly been supported from the wages of her prostitution. "He wanted some to-day," she said, "whereas I have not tasted meat since yesterday morning."

"Not tasted meat?"

"Not one crumb," said the girl, wiping her bleeding mouth

and tear-wet cheeks ; “ not one single crumb has passed my lips.”

“ If that be the case,” I said, “ thou hadst best come this way ;” and so I led her to a cook’s shop, where according to her choice, she had a plate of hot pie, which I paid for and left her eating it.

“ Did I not promise that I would meet you once more,” said a gentle voice, as I stepped into the street.

“ Good heavens ! Catherine ! ” I said, “ is that you.”

“ It is even me, and I have now redeemed my promise.”

“ Did you see me go in here ? ” I said.

“ I saw both you and your companion go in,” she said ; “ I marked you coming down the street.”

“ Dear Catherine, you seem unwell—you are agitated ; let us seek a more suitable place.”

“ This place is very suitable, for all I now have to say is—to bid you good-bye.”

“ Shall I not go with you ? ” I asked.

“ No, I have company here,” she replied, pointing to an elderly woman who stood at a short distance. “ Farewell,” she added, “ Old Lissy might have been further mistaken ;” and with that she stepped over to the old woman, and they both went down the Mill-Gate—one of them looking back, as I perceived, ere they finally disappeared.

Poor Catherine ! Three months previously I could not have believed that a meeting and parting of ours could have taken place with so little emotion on my side.

It was now the season when Middleton wakes was approaching, and as Mima would have to come to Manchester to buy a new gown, we arranged in all the simplicity of our hearts, that she should call at my lodgings, when I would accompany her in shopping, and afterwards see her on the way towards home. I gave my landlady to understand that a young woman, “ my cousin, from the country,” would be there that day. Well, I waited all the morning, but Mima came not ; all the noon, but there was no appearance of the expected one. Two, three, four o’clock were gone, and unable to rest I kept passing and repassing from my lodgings to the

street and back again ; still my "dove appeared not at the window ;" and during a pang which was not to be borne, I rushed into the street, and paced, very probable like one deranged, two or three times across the Baron's yard. In a few minutes I controlled myself sufficiently to return, and was preparing to stride desperately the steps of the entry, when, looking up, who should be coming down, agitated and trembling, but the dear one who had caused all my uneasiness. "Eh, Mima !" "Eh, Samhul !" were our only exclamations, as we stood gazing on each other, unable for a moment to reciprocate any other token of pleasure. My old landlady and one or two old neighbour women stood at the upper end of the court, eyeing us and our motions with the knowing curiosity for which persons of their condition are remarkable. "She's Samhul's cousin from the country," said my landlady. "Nay," replied another, "yonder are no cousins." "If they are cousins," remarked a third, "they're cousins an' something else besides."

I wished Mima to stop and have tea, but she declined, not liking the scrutiny of the old women, who had been putting questions to her when she went up the court to inquire for me. Besides she had two young girls with her whom she had left waiting in the churchyard, so I went with her and we found the girls, and after shopping and looking through the town, we returned and rested at Tinker's Gardens, then a sweet bowery place, and still as solitude on that week-day afternoon. Here we took refreshment in one of the secluded arbours, and whilst our two young companions strolled round viewing the gardens, I and my fair one had a most agreeable opportunity for expressing all that our full hearts permitted us to say. As night approached, we left this pleasant place, and I escorted my company into the new high-road which was then in the course of formation betwixt Manchester and Middleton. We knew not how to part, and I kept going further and further until we arrived at Middleton, where having seen Mima and her companions within a few yards of home, I left them and returned to Manchester with as much happiness in my heart as a human being could experience and live.



The ensuing wakes at Middleton was probably celebrated with a greater degree of finery and a more plenteous hospitality than it had ever been before, or has been since: besides banners, groves of evergreen, garlands of flowers, and dancers numerous, not fewer than six bands of music paraded the town, and eleven rush-carts. But Mima and I left all the gaud, and the music, and the wonder-seeing crowd, to have our lone walks in the woods. To us the wakes and everything connected with it appeared as vanity unworthy of human thought. Mima took her milking cans and I went with her, but when we got to the woods the kine were not to be found, so we left the cans at the milking booth—a shed of wattles—and a most pleasant excursion we had in search of the cows, and after rambling long, often, indeed, forgetful of the beasts, we found them at last, in a shady hollow, licking the tender herbage that fringed a little rill. So we drove them to the booth and Mima milked them, and then with her cans, one in the other and gracefully balanced on her head, we returned to the crowded street and separated. That evening, however, we had another and a longer walk. Turning away from “vanity fair,” we sought the lone bypaths and sweet meadows of Hopwood, where, whilst the jingle and hubbub sounded afar off, we

“Wander’d by the greenwood-side,  
And heard the waters croon;  
And on the bank beside the path,  
For hours thegither sat,  
In the silentness of joy.”

And many a time since that happy eve have the same twain been seated on that “Bank beside the path,” in the muteness of sorrow, as well as “In the silentness of joy.”

## CHAPTER XXII.

### SELF-DISPOSAL, BUT NOT SELF-CONTROL—FURTHER DEROGATION AND CONSEQUENT TROUBLE.

AT this time the trade was going remarkably well, and weaving was a very profitable employment. I went back to live at Middleton, and got a loom with board and lodgings at an old acquaintance of my father's. Being now master of my own time, I partook of country amusements with the other young fellows of the neighbourhood, and frequently went out a-hunting. After one of these gatherings when we had a very hard run, during which I had footed it pretty cleverly, one of the old hunters, Sam Stott by name, was so pleased with my performance, that when the hunt was over he insisted on treating me. We accordingly turned into the first public-house we came to, and that happened to be the identical one at Trub Smithy, at the door of which "Tummus' Cawve" was unfortunately killed, which accident is so well described in Tim Bobbin's celebrated "Lancashire Dialect." The day had been excessively wet, which had not, however, prevented a very large attendance at the hunt. The publichouse was consequently crowded, but Old Sam contrived to make a way into a corner, where he having ordered some "warm ale and ginger," the best thing in the world, he said, after a wet day, we sat drinking until our clothes were dry on our backs, that being the only natural and proper way, as he insisted, in which clothes ought to be dried, fires being intended for roasting and boiling meat only, and to warm old women, but never meant for the drying of hunters' clothes. So we made ourselves comfortable, and as may be supposed, by the time our clothes

were dry, we were rather far beyond the line of sobriety. This was, I believe, my first decided offence of that nature, and well had it been had it been my last.

This breach, slight as it appeared to me at the time, was followed by grave consequences. It led to a new set of acquaintances, to a wider and wilder range of enjoyment; it wonderfully loosened my notions of propriety, already too much relaxed in one respect, and brought me to the conclusion that "as a young man was not answerable for the conduct of those whose company he kept, neither was he to be damaged by the associating with them," that there was no great harm in "doing as others did," and that "there were worse things after all, than a young fellow getting a drop too much, now and then." This was a pitiable state of mind for one of my age to be in; and though I did not, in consequence, become a reprobate and a habitual drunkard, I became more easy about the scandal and the sin of inebriety, and the path to other transgressions was thus temptingly laid open.

One day I was startled by the sound of the fife and the drum, and on going to learn the cause, I found the overseers and constables at one of the publichouses, enlisting volunteers for the "army of reserve." I immediately offered myself, and was the first that was accepted. After that a number of young men joined; we got a shilling each and a cockade, with as much ale as we chose to drink, and the consequence was that, like the rest of my comrades, I went home in much the same condition as that in which I returned from the hunting bout. On the day following we had another meeting with the town's officers, and after parading round the neighbourhood with fife and drum, we enlisted as many as we wanted, and we separated in the same state as we were in the night before. After which we were never more mustered, or even called upon; and all the money expended, as far as the township of Middleton was concerned, was entirely thrown away. Constables and overseers had, in those days, a very straightforward way of doing business. On receiving an order, or even a direction less tangible, from a magistrate or magistrate's clerk, it was forthwith carried into effect. The magistrate was

everything, the ratepayers and vestry nothing, and money was expended which was never inquired into afterwards. If the minister, or some one or two of the "gentleman ratepayers," put a question or so to the overseer when he met him, and the reply was, "Oh, Mr. A. or Mr. B. the magistrate ordered it," all would be right, and nothing further would be said about the matter. These sort of affairs are managed somewhat differently now in this year 1848, when I am writing these lines.

It was at this time, whilst I was a recruit with my cockade in my hat, that I first heard the song of "Jone o' Grinfilt," at Manchester. It was a sort of doggerel that took well, being just suited to current events and the taste of the loyally vociferous multitude. We have now been at peace during thirty years, and the multitude is still here, many-headed, loud-tongued, as of yore, but where is the loyalty? Here absolutely it is not. With no English multitude is it to be found. How, then, has it been banished, and whither is it gone? These are questions which I think are worthy of the deep consideration of our philosophers and statesmen, and to their elucidation I must leave them. One opinion, however, I, humble as I am, may venture to propound, and that is, there have been great faults somewhere, or all the ancient loyalty of our working population would not have disappeared and left, as it has done, in its stead, Irish felony in our towns, and riff-raff Chartism in our villages. Assuredly there has been enormous mismanagement somewhere, and our gracious Queen, when she meets her faithful Commons, would do well to put the question—What has become of the loyalty of that "bold peasantry," once their "country's pride"? Is it destroyed? Why has it been destroyed?—These would be found to be potent and puzzling questions, I think.

Having thus wended my downward course pretty rapidly, with now and then a pang of conscience which was soon quieted, and a flush of shame which was soon suppressed: having become a hunter with the wildest, a lover of company not the choicest, one no longer a stranger at the tavern, and a follower of the fife and drum, the reader will scarcely be surprised at learning



that further humiliation awaited me ; and that during one of my wild outbreaks, having obtained the company of a Yorkshire lass, as thoughtless as myself, it was not long before I became amenable to the parish authorities, for certain expenses which were about to be incurred.

My old uncle and aunt, with whom I again lived, read me some very grave lessons when the news of this affair broke out. For my part, I was covered with confusion, and torn by remorse, for I had early discovered that, had there been no other female in the way, I never could have made up my mind to become the husband of the one I had thus injured. I was somewhat relieved, however, by learning that she took the affair less to heart than many would have done, and that the obtaining of a handsome weekly allowance was with her as much a subject of consideration as any other. I say I was relieved, but I never hoped, never attempted to palliate the wrong I had done, or to evade the shame I had incurred.

One morning about Christmas, after being out spending the night, I returned home and flung myself on the bed with my clothes on. It was just breaking day when I heard the front door, which I had left unbolted, open, and a rough voice shout "Hallo!" I desired my cousin Hannah, who I had heard was awake, and who slept in the same chamber with her brother and myself, to ascertain who the person was, and she tried to do so, but could only make out that it was some strange person, and that he wanted her father. I being dressed, went downstairs at once, and found a tall, powerful, broad-set man standing with his back against the door-post, and holding the door catch with one hand. I knew him instantly to be Samuel Fielding, the constable, for the shutters being closed and the place quite dark, I could see him against the grey of the morning whilst he could not distinguish me. "Whot," I said, "aryo wantin' mi feyther, then?"

"Aye," he replied ; "but dusno one Samhul Beamfort live heer?"

"Yoy he dus," I said ; "dunyo want him too?"

"Aye, I awnt him too," he replied, "thy name's Beamfort isno it?"

"Nowe," I said, "my name's Taylior, but Samhul's upstairs; I con coe on him deawn, as yo want'n him."

Meanwhile I had been getting my feet into my shoes, my hat being beyond my reach, and now standing at the bottom of the stairs, I shouted lustily, "Samhul! come deawn, theaw'rt wanted directly. Dusto yer, Samhul? come deawn." "Yod'n better step in an' sit yo' deawn;" I said to the constable, "Samhul will be heer in a minnit."

The cunning old fox, however, would neither come in nor sit down, so I loitered about, as it were, in the dark, humming a snatch of a tune, and shuffling to and fro, betwixt the house and the kitchen.

I could hear that some of the family were stirring upstairs—in fact, my very unaccountable summons had awakened them all.

"He'll be heer directly," I said; "he's comin': " and with that I shot the bolt of the back door, flung it open, and darted down the street, never stopping to look at another man who made a grasp at me, and the wind of whose fist, as I sprung past him, I felt on my ear.

Down the street I went, and this new foe at my heels. He was one of the best "sprint-runners" in Middleton, but he might as well have run after a hart-royal. I leaped the fence in the lane, crossed the broad meadow, and was safe in Middleton Wood by the time the disappointed official got back, puffing and blowing, to the bottom of my uncle's stairs. For it would seem the constables were not quite certain whether or not the delinquent had escaped. By that time my uncle was coming down, as was his wont, part dressed, when the officers eagerly inquired where Samhul was.

"Marry," he said (a common exclamation), "I reckon he went eawt at th' back dur, an' I conno tell where he is neaw."

"Wur that really him, then?" asked the constables.

"Well, I believe it wur," said my uncle, laughing till his sides shook as the two worthies hurried into the street.

By that time, however, I was walking leisurely towards Prestwich, where I arrived at breakfast-time, just as Mary Wilde and her father were sitting down to their porridge.

They were very glad to see me, though surprised that I came without hat. I, however, explained my circumstances as briefly as possible on account of Mary. I got a breakfast with them, good enough for a king; and the kind girl cleaned my shoes, and washed my stockings, which were covered with mud. She also borrowed me a hat, and after dinner, being again in travelling trim, I went to my father at Manchester, who, after a sound rating, made all things right with the overseers, and I returned to Middleton.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### A LONG JOURNEY AND A NEW LIFE.

BUT I had become strangely unsettled, and it was time that a change of some sort should take place. I again left Middleton, and seeing bills up at Manchester that a number of young men were wanted for the coasting trade betwixt South Shields and London, I engaged with a person appointed to make contracts, and after parting from my father, who went down on his knees and prayed earnestly that God would recall me from sin, I went through Middleton, bade adieu to Mima, who was heart-broken; and mounting a coach at Oldham, I, with seven others—volunteers like myself—reached York that night, and stopped there. The morning following our conductor led us through that wonderful structure the Minster, after which we mounted coach again, and finished our second day's journey at a large inn at Sunderland, where we again stopped all night.

My companions were chiefly lads from factories and dye-houses: a rude and simple set they were, and, I believe, pretty honest also. I know not how it happened, but certainly the people of the house seemed to feel an interest in my welfare. They knew for what service we were destined, and I received more than one hint that I should repent of the step I was taking. The cook and the bustling old waiter both seemed to think that I was cut out for something else than a sailor, and they dropped privately certain ominous intimations about hardships, and dangers, and impressments. At last I was given to understand that if I would remain at the inn, and make myself useful in whatever I could do, my conductor



should be satisfied, and I should be well treated, and be protected from the press-gang; but thanking the motherly-looking hostess for her kind offer, I declined it, and went forward with my party to South Shields.

Here we were quartered at a publichouse by the quay side, and at night slept on board a brig which lay alongside, my bed being made of sails spread on the floor of the half deck, with a coil of rope for my pillow. In the course of a few days we signed indentures to serve Nicholas Fairles, Esquire, during three years, in return for which we were to have £20 per annum, ship allowance, and protection from impressment, every man receiving at the time a document from the Admiralty which was to be his protection. Our ship was the brig *Æneas*, Matthew Peacock, master; and after having received our outfit of clothes and sea stock of groceries and other articles, we took on board a cargo of coal, and heaving our anchor, we sailed with the night tide, and were soon out of the harbour. Five of our Manchester party, with some old hands, formed the crew of this vessel; and after the anchor was secured, the spars lashed, and the sails set, the watch was called over, and I, being on the captain's watch, went below with the rest; the mate, William Peacock, the captain's son, a fine young seaman, remaining on deck with his portion of the crew. And thus was I, at last, a sailor on the North Sea.

From what appeared to me to have been a very short sleep, I was aroused by three thundering knocks and a hoarse shout down the hatchway, "Starboard watch, ahoy." I was on deck immediately, indeed I had not undressed, but had slept on my old bed of sail and rope. Our captain was standing near the companion, and after rubbing my eyes I saw the shore with its green hills and homesteads on our starboard, or right hand, whilst the open ocean lay glistening and heaving beneath the new light of the morning on our left. I was not long, however, in discerning that several ships seemed to be crossing towards the course we were steering, and from a sense of duty, pointing them out to the captain, I asked him whether they were not French? Though he was not much given to pleasantry, he pretended to be of opinion that they

possibly might be "Frenchmen," and asked what I thought should be done in case they were? "Well," I said very simply, "I reckon we shan hato feyght 'em then." "I suppose we shall in that case," he said. "An' so, Captain," I continued, "hadno we better be gettin' th' cannons ready," alluding to two carronades on the quarter-deck, and two stern chasers. This answer so diverted him that he gave a hearty laugh, and afterwards I was rather a favourite with him.

When we were off Robin Hood's Bay, one of the stern guns was fired, and in a short time a fishing cobble came alongside, and the captain went ashore. His family lived there, and as it was probable we should go from London to Montreal for timber, he wished to bid them good-bye. In a short time he returned, bringing his wife with him; a clever, good-looking woman she was. She took leave of her son, and the captain saw her back on shore, and then coming on board, we set sail and again made for the open sea. We had scarcely got from under the rocks of the bay, when the wind began to blow against us, and we had a threatening sun-down, and a terrible night—at least, so it appeared to me. I was awoke at one time by three thundering knocks as before, followed by the summons—"All hands, ahoy," and on getting on deck the first circumstance that took my attention was that waves, having the appearance of streams of fire, were breaking over the bows of the vessel and sweeping the deck. In a moment I was up to the knees, and I actually jumped, thinking I should be burned, but I soon found out my mistake. The scene on deck was such as made us young seamen feel very grave. There was the vessel, climbing, as it were, up the huge billows, and next plunging headlong as if she were going to the bottom at once. Then the horrid tempest of waves uprushing, and of winds down-sweeping, filled space with their terrible howl. The hoary old deep moaned as it were rent into chasms, or sobbed as it closed weltering and rose into precipices. Then would be a momentary lull, and presently the tremendous strife would be renewed, as the heavens would at last rend the deep from its bottom, and the deep would bury the heavens in its abyss. Nothing else was heard save the thousand frightful

tones of the wind amongst the rigging—tones more appalling, if possible, than the roar of the giant storm. When the captain's voice was at last distinguished, he was giving rapid orders to the men to secure the sails and haul taut the ropes. We young ones were not sent aloft, and we were but of little use on the deck, except in helping the seamen to pull such ropes as were pointed out to us. All that night the storm continued, the waves continually breaking over us, and all hands constantly on deck. We then began to compare our present situation with those we had left, and most of us would have made any sacrifice, short of life, to have regained our humble homes on shore. For my part, when daylight came, and I beheld Whitby Abbey, and next Scarborough Castle, rock-grafted on their stubborn heights, and steadfastly secure amid the drifting clouds, I should have deemed myself fortunate had I been cast even naked amid their dark and frowning ruins. I thought of my father and his earnest prayer—I thought of dear Mima, and was not left without hope. One consolatory reflection opportunely occurred, and that was—that I stood as good a chance of outliving the storm as did my shipmates—and that whilst there was a chance it was of no use to despair. And so, as the saying is, “setting a hard heart agen hard wark,” I did my best towards bearing a hand wherever I could be of use. This our second day was almost as stormy as the night had been, and bitter cold. The shrouds were coated with ice, and the hands of us landsmen were blue and benumbed, notwithstanding which, when the men had to go aloft to handle the sails, I and a Welsh lad mounted with them, but the men sent us down, saying we could not be of any use, and if we went on the yard we should only go overboard. So we came on deck, and worked as well as we could there; but our willingness to share danger and hardship with the old seamen got us more favourably looked upon. The storm continued all this day and all night again. The captain began to serve out grog, the seamen muttered to each other, and exchanged cheerless glances. The pumps were set to work, as the vessel was said to have too much water; and we landsmen were useful at this labour, in doing which we also



kept ourselves warm. On the third morning the wind began to lull ; it also changed to the north, and after a pleasant run, we anchored in Yarmouth Roads.

The storm had done much damage all along the coast, and in sailing betwixt Yarmouth and Lowestoft, we counted no fewer than nineteen vessels, of various descriptions, which had been driven on shore. We now went smartly before the wind, and soon had the Essex coast on our right, and the Kentish one on our left, entering the mouth of the Thames. And now, after getting a little inland, such a paradise opened before us as I had never previously imagined could exist in England. Splendid villas amid groves, fairy-looking little bowers, sweet nestling places for happy families, peeping behind verdant shrubberies, or glimmering all white in shadowy vistas ; the gently waving foliage was of a living, new-made green, whilst the shorn sward that came sloping to the water's edge was of an emerald brilliancy, and hung lipping the waves as if it would suck them for ever.

On the first Sunday after our arrival, we apprentices were indulged with a walk on shore. Being provided with Admiralty protections, and instructed how to act if we were molested by the press-gang, we first made our way to St. Paul's, where we stood beneath the wondrous dome, twice the height of our top-gallant mast, and with almost awful surprise, expressed our doubts of the strange things we heard about the whispering gallery ; for we did not go up, the state of our finances would not allow that. Next we went to Tower Hill, and viewed the moat, and walls, and battlements of the tough old fortress, our finances, as before, preventing us from going inside. Westminster Abbey was the object which next attracted us, and here we stayed viewing the monuments, many of which were in commemoration of authors by whose works I had been delighted. Ah ! and did I not stand, with long-looking and tear-wet eyes, before the tablets of my old Homeric Pope, and my divine Milton, my companions asking at last why the sleeve of my jacket was put so often in requisition, and I replying by telling them what wondrous books these two had written, a reason which soon satisfied my comrades, who, the



Welsh lad excepted, neither knew nor cared anything about books. So having wandered about the city till we were tired, we got some refreshment at a publichouse, and then returned to our ship.

In due time our cargo was discharged, and we took in ballast, after which we weighed our anchor, and dropped down the river, and instead of taking our course for Montreal, as we had at one time expected we should, we steered back the same way as we had come, and, after a short and pleasant trip, again entered the Tyne and anchored at South Shields, where we again took in coal, and again returned to London.

The name of our vessel, as before mentioned, being the *Æneas*, I took an opportunity one day of leading our mate into a conversation on the subject, when he narrated the old tale of *Æneas* carrying his father on his shoulders out of the ruins of burning Troy, and said there was a book in the cabin which told all about it. Was there, I said, what was the name of the book? The name of the book, he said, was the *Æneid*. Ah! that was a famous book; once I had read it, and would now like to read it again. As for that, he said, he could not make me a promise, but sometime when his father was ashore, he would let me see the book. So accordingly one day, after we had put his father ashore, he beckoned me into the cabin, and there, lying on a table in a kind of state, as a family Bible does at the head of a cottage, he showed me a handsome, old-fashioned looking folio volume, which indeed I found to be the *Æneid* in English, with notes. I would have sacrificed anything almost for an opportunity to examine the interesting volume, but the mate seemed to think he had indulged me enough, and so I thanked him, and withdrew.

I was always the first of our party to go aloft, and I could soon mount to the top-gallant mast without going through "the lubber hole." I also became expert at furling and reefing, working with the other hands at whatever had to be done aloft. At handling the braces I was also pretty clever, and at the windlass, the capstan, or the pump, I was as good as any on board. I was also the bow oarsman of the

jolly-boat, and generally attended the captain when he went on shore.

The perils attending a sailor's life are no doubt many, but those which have to be encountered on this coast are probably far greater than are presented on any other coast of our island. The perils, however, are almost as nothing when compared with the hardships which young sailors in this trade have to endure. Hence, mere danger is not so much thought of by them, and anything which interrupts the wear and tear which they daily undergo is felt to be a relief rather than a misfortune, and is accepted accordingly. Thus it is that our unconquerable sailors are made, and such is the rude and ruthless school in which they are nurtured and brought up. With them, a battle or a storm is little more than a divertisement, the increased labour for the occasion being forgotten in the excitement of action. The hardest workers will always be the hardest and best fighters;—hardest because assured and persevering, and best because, whatever situation they are placed in, mind is ever present directing to the best effect. None, save a working nation can, therefore, ever conquer England. And where are such workers as ours to be found? Let us then cherish our workers. Let them be anxiously cared for, they are the strength and the defence of the country, and of everything within it which is worth defending. Let them never have less than plenty of all comfortable requisites, whatever other class is stinted. Let them be accepted with respect, so long as that respect is merited. They are all fellow-men; the honest hard-handed ones are the noblest of men in God's High Court, and that is high enough for any ambition; and, take ours for all in all, with their faults and depreciations, the wide world has not, in this our day, such another race as that which guards the shores, and labours on the fields and in the manufactories of Old England.

In one of our voyages, or rather trips, as we used to call them, we passed through a fleet of ships of war, which lay at anchor in Yarmouth Roads. We expected being overhauled for hands, but were not, and we sailed forward without stopping. The sight of those huge floating masses, instead of inspiring

me with chivalrous feelings, called forth those of a quite different description. I looked upon them as so many prisons where men were hopelessly confined, and punished according to the caprice of unreasonable and irresponsible taskmasters. The bit of smart discipline which we now and then had on board our own little craft gave me an idea of what these great fire-belching concerns must be. Our old sailors also had given us a few lessons respecting the manner in which order was maintained in those communities, and as I eyed them unseen—for our captain ordered us not to show ourselves—I almost shuddered at the idea of becoming one of their crew. The fleet, as a whole, was certainly a noble spectacle to behold. A demonstration of that sublimely audacious spirit by which Britain proclaimed to the world, “I reign!” and the world submitted. But its details I could not contemplate without a shudder, and I secretly wished that I was beyond the chance of having some day a closer acquaintanceship forced upon me. On our return trip the fleet was still there, but considerably augmented by transport ships having troops on board. A large number of coasting vessels were now returning to the north, and as they approached the fleet nearly every vessel was brought to and boarded, the best of the hands being transferred to the ships of war. From the vessel which immediately proceeded ours several hands were pressed, but it so happened that when ours came to pass, both the guard boats were full, and were taking their prizes to the ship appointed to receive them, whilst in the hurry of the moment we got clear through, and so escaped that very unpleasant visitation.

I had now perhaps made some half-dozen trips betwixt Shields and London, and having seen enough of a sailor’s life to banish the romantic notions with which the popular songs of the day had invested it, wishful also to enjoy once more the sweets of liberty whilst yet its attainment was possible, I secretly determined on leaving the ship whenever an opportunity occurred for my doing so. On our next arrival at London, therefore, with a view to disguise my intention, and render my flight doubtful, a day or two before we were to proceed to sea again, I laid in a good stock of groceries, and what-



ever other matters it was our custom to procure. I washed my linen, mended my clothes, and placed everything in excellent order in my berth, so that when the captain and my ship-mates went to examine it, as I calculated they would when I became absent, they might find a complete preparation for my going to sea with the vessel, and in consequence be impressed with the idea that I was not a voluntary absentee, but that I must have been crimped into some of the sponging-houses, and smuggled on board a king's ship. This, I supposed, would cause an advertisement to be immediately put out, or a hue and cry to be issued after me, and inasmuch as the most probable course which the captain would take would be to make a day or two's inquiry in such places where he would suppose I was most likely to be found, I should thus, at any rate, have a decent start of my pursuers, if, indeed, after such a loss of time, they should deem it worth their trouble to follow at all. My plans being thus arranged, I one evening asked permission to go ashore for the purchase of one or two articles which I still wanted. The permission was readily granted, and the boat landed me opposite to Bell-wharf pier. I immediately proceeded to Ratcliffe Highway, and after purchasing a pair of stockings—my own having been left on board as a blind with my other things—I entered an eating-house, and there spent some time till dusk was pretty well set in. I thence went into the city, to St. Paul's, inquiring my way into Aldersgate Street, and when there I ventured to accost a respectable-looking person and requested him to be so kind as to direct me towards Islington, which, of course, he did, and I passed through that suburb without stopping or being questioned. An officer, in naval uniform, whom I met, certainly took more notice of me than was quite to my liking, but he passed on and did not speak. I next inquired the way to Highgate, knowing that if I got there I should be on the direct great northern road, and at Highgate, whilst stopping at a publichouse, I ascertained that the next place on my route would be Whetstone, and the next after that Barnet. I accordingly walked through Whetstone and through Barnet without stopping. I now considered myself fairly launched on



my journey. I had been fortunate in getting clear of the vicinity of the shipping and of the city without being questioned, and was now ten miles from St. Paul's. I once more breathed the sweet country air; the smell of mown meadows sometimes came across my path. I had seven shillings in my pocket, and though as yet uncertain of my success, I was full of hope and delighted with the present enjoyment of freedom. I had not gone far, however, before I became somewhat embarrassed, the night was getting far advanced, the country less populous, and I was uncertain both as to the name of my next stage and the course I should keep. I had not gone far, however, before I met a man to whom I put the necessary questions, and who told me to keep on the broad highway, to the left, and that the next town of any note which I should arrive at would be St. Albans. I thanked the man for his information, when he said, "Stop; I know what you are, and what you are about."

"Do you?" said I, rather surprised, but in a good-humoured manner.

"Indeed I do," replied the man; "you are a sailor, and are running away from your ship."

"You might be a wizard," I said, "for what you say is perfect truth."

"Well, now," said he, "as you have been as candid as I was frank, I'll tell you something which may be of use to you."

I thanked him.

"At St. Albans," he continued, "a party of marines are stationed, who press every sailor that appears in the town. They even press them off the coaches, or other vehicles, if they get a sight of them. Through St. Albans, however, you must go, and you will be pressed if you appear in the streets; you must, therefore, get through the town without being seen, if possible. Fortunately it may be done. In a short time you will overtake a waggon which carries goods on this main road. You must get to ride inside of it, get stowed amongst the packages, and never show your face until you are clearly on the other side of the town."

I thanked him most gratefully for his information, and

begged that he would not mention to any one having seen such a person as myself on the road. He desired that I would make myself easy on that score, and so with expressions of thankfulness on my part, and of kindly wishes on his, we separated.

It was now about midnight, all was still and silent on the road. I was about eight miles from St. Albans, and by the time I had shortened the distance by three I overtook the waggon, the tail of which being full of soldiers' wives and their children, I could not get in there; the driver, however, offered me a snug place in the hay-sheet—a large and strong horse-hair cloth which fastened in front of the vehicle, and presented a resting-place as comfortable as a hammock, and quite large enough to conceal me. I, therefore, got into my hiding-place, and was almost instantly fast asleep. I must have ridden about four miles, though to me it seemed but a few minutes since I got in, when the driver awoke me and asked which road I was going when I got through the town?

"Why the main road, to be sure," I said.

"Yes, but which main road?" asked the man.

"The main road down into the north; into Lancashire," I said. "There is none other, is there?"

"Oh, yes," said the man, "there is the main road to Bedford and those parts, and that's the road I'm a-going."

Instead of saying, "Well, drive me to Bedford then, or anywhere else, so you don't land me here in sight of the press-gang;"—instead of so considering in my own mind, I might have suddenly become demented, for I alighted from my covert, and shaking the hay-seeds from my clothes as well as I could, I gave the man some copper, and walked right into the broad street of St. Albans.

Had I been acquainted with the topography of the country, the road to Bedford was the very road I should have taken after being once at St. Albans. But as it happened, I was ignorant of these things, else the main road was the one I should have most avoided. After all, however, though the Old One himself seemed to be leading me, it was, perhaps, for the best.

It was a very fine summer's morning, and being Saturday, the market-place was occupied by numbers of country people setting out their standings of butter, eggs, poultry, and vegetables. Directly through the midst of these market people lay my way, and I stepped it with seeming equanimity, and as much of real indifference as I could muster, for, after all, as I reflected, if the very worst happened, I should only be disappointed in present hope, and be sent on board a ship of war as many hundreds had been before me. So I walked forward, the people almost lifting their eyes in wonder at seeing a tall, gaunt, weather-browned sailor traversing that perilous ground.

I had got clear of the market-place, and was proceeding down a flagged footpath leading to the outskirts of the town, and already breathing more freely, when the sound of a light slip-shod step approached behind me. I thought it was some servant girl going out for her morning's milk or hot-roll, and never turned my head. A slap on the shoulder, however, and the salutation, "Hollo, shipmate," caused me to face about, when what should stand before me but a marine, in his blue over-coat and girdled hat without feather.

At that moment I felt as little ruffled as if we had been old acquaintance, determined, however, not to be taken if either presence of mind or resistance could prevent it.

"Hollo, shipmate," said I.

"What are you?" asked the man.

"What am I? I'm a servant," I replied. A term not used in the Royal Navy, but by which persons under contract are distinguished in the trade of our Eastern Coast.

"A servant?—what's that?"

"Why, a servant—that's all," I replied.

By this time three other marines had joined us.

"Where's your pass, to pass you through the country?" asked the first man.

"I have no pass," I said; "I'm a free-born subject of this kingdom, and can travel this or any other high-road without carrying a pass at all."

The men looked at each other, and then at me. They could



not comprehend the reason of my cool manner and unusual language. They had no idea of free-born subjects, nor of sailors travelling without passes.

"Then you have no papers?" said the first man, who seemed to be the superior of the party.

"Why, as for that," I said, "I daresay I can show a kind of a small matter which will, perhaps, satisfy you for the present." Saying which, I took my protection from an old black pocket-book which I carried in my hat.

"Oh, if you have any written papers to show," he said, "you must go with us to our captain, I can't read writing."

So much the better, I thought, and straightway displayed the document at length, knowing if it could do me no good, neither could it do me any harm. "Do you see that?" I asked, pointing to the broad seal of the Admiralty, stamped with an anchor.

"Oh! be d—d," said the man; "you have been discharged from a man-of-war."

"Why, you lubber," I said, in a half-familiar way, "do you think if I hadn't I should have come here?"

"Ah! he won't do," said one or two of the party.

"You may go about your business," said the first man, turning to walk off with the others.

"Ahoy, there," I said, "are you going to stop a shipmate on shore this way, without standing so much as a glass of grog for him?"

"You be d—d," said the corporal, and hastened up the street to join his comrades.

Several decent-looking farmers, who had left their produce in the market, stood in the cart-road watching the whole proceeding, and when the marines had left, they said, "Well, young fellow, you are the first blue-jacket that has slipt through the fingers of yonder scoundrels this long time." I entered into friendly conversation with these men, and as they were going my way I had their company on the road as far as Redburn, where, after partaking with them a glass or two of ale, we parted.

I next passed through Hemel Hempstead, Market Street,



and Dunstable, always concealing myself, as well as I could, when I heard a coach coming either way, until it passed. At Hockliffe I rested some time, and had a good sleep behind a hedge. I thence went through Woburn, and afterwards through Newport Pagnell, and when night came, and the glow-worms were shining in the hedges I found myself opposite to a small lone publichouse, near the village of Stoke Goldington, in Buckinghamshire, and about eleven miles from Northampton.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### JOURNEY PURSUED—ADVENTURES—DIFFICULTIES—HOME.

INTO this humble hostelry I entered and got some bread and cheese and ale for supper. The house appeared to be kept by an elderly couple, with a woman servant, and when I mentioned my wish to stop there for the night, they said they could not find me a bed in the house, but if I would put up with a good litter of straw in the stable, I should be welcome to rest there. I accepted their kind offer with pleasure, and lay down, thanking God that I could rest without the hated "Starboard watch, ahoy" breaking my slumbers; and save that once or twice I was awaked by rats tripping over me, and by the cackling of fowls and the quacking of ducks, a king never enjoyed sounder repose. In the morning, it being Sunday, I brushed my shoes, washed myself well at the pump, and turned my linen the cleaner side out, after which I got a basin of milk and bread for breakfast, and demanding my shot, the old folks told me I had nothing to pay, and so with truly grateful thanks for their kindness I bade them farewell, and continued my journey.

It was a lovely morning, and my way lay through a tract of country which at every bend and undulation of the road, presented some object, or group, or opening upon scenery, which was continually suggestive of the fact, that this was indeed a land where men and women knew how to live and be happy at their own homes. Here, on one hand, would be a substantial farmhouse, with its open door displaying much plenty within, its strong-limbed hinds feeding the horses or cleaning the stables, and its ruddy-brown damsels milking

the kine, which stood sleepily lashing their tails on their backs or flapping their ears in the sun. The next habitation would probably be a little white cottage, with a low door, and small leaded windows shadowed by vinery, and the eaves of the thatch slouched down, as if to prevent the wind from upturning them. A whine and a grunt would be heard in the sty, and a broad garden, darkened at one end by fruit trees, would be abundant

“Of herbs and other country messes.”

Next a clear tiny rill comes trickling by the road-side ; soon we are under a tall young wood, with an old tree here and there matted with ivy or robed in hoar lichen. Soon we perceive a house of the higher order, with its palisades, its gravelled walk, its bright evergreens, its clean steps, and its stately and decent quietude ; although if the white blinds were rolled up instead of being down, it would seem all the more frank, cheerful, and Christian like. Next, perhaps, we have a glimpse of a spire rising above tall trees, or the turret of a grey old-looking bell tower sends forth its summons to the villagers for their morning's devotion. Wending on our journey, hills and vales, with meads, pastures, and green crops spread all over their ridges and down to their brook margins, are laid out luxuriantly before the ever-pleased eye ; whilst far off, in the opening of hoary old woods, are seen tower and battlement of some lordly hall. Such, O England ! are the objects constantly presented to the eye of travellers amid thy rural scenes. Such are the cause and the results of thy true greatness. First labour and its reward, from which follow plenty, peace, reverence, obedience, order, security, opulence ; and, as a consequence of these, encouragement to continued exertion. Cherish, then, these elements of giant power for the sake of their inestimable results, which are the guarantees of untold blessings for all. Promote honest labour. Honour it wherever or however found. Have respect to the horny hand and the dewy forehead, and oh ! with kindness endeavour to attach the heart which has the courage to encounter peril, hardship, and stringent toil day by day, without a murmur,

and without a wish, save only that it may be duly rewarded. Yes; be just, noble England, to thy sons of labour. Then, so long as thy rock foundations endure shalt thou be happy: the conservator of thy own strength, the arbiter of thy own destiny.

Through such a country as this, and breathing an air sweeter than which none ever wafted over Paradise, had I walked some five or six miles, when the bark of a dog, and the appearance of sundry low tents, a horse, a mare and her foal, an ass or two, a heap of panniers, a lurcher and a couple of terriers, pans, pots, and a kettle on a fire, which a lad was blowing into red heat, made me aware that I was, for the first time, about to behold a family of gipsies, in their favourite state of encampment. The tribe consisted of three stout men and as many women, one of them very old and deformed, and one, a superb being, with majestic golden pendants, that touched the crimson hood on her shoulders; a coil of luxuriant hair lay across her knees, as thick as a mainshroud and as glossy as a skein of silk, whilst her magnificently black and darkly shadowed eyes were like two gems, light-emittent through midnight. Two of the men and one female were asleep in tents, some children were also at rest, a boy or two were engaged with the dogs; the horses and the asses were pasturing, one man was smoking a short pipe, and skinning a rabbit the while, the queen sat plaiting what seemed to be a girdle of many colours, and the old one was tending a cake in the embers. A young damsel sat there—a beauty such as I had never before beheld, not even in Lancashire, for she was different from them all, though not surpassing—nothing human could do that—but this had a feminine grace, and a faultless beauty of a type which was entirely new to me. A scarlet strap and a short sleeve were the only covering to her shoulders, her neck and arms being entirely bare. Over the front of a laced bodice of various hues, hung a small bib of fine linen, which so far covered her bosom as modesty required. A green kirtle bound her waist and fell below her knees, leaving her legs and feet, which were models of symmetry, as innocent of hose or pumps as they were at her birth. Her



complexion was a clear olive, whilst her features I can only describe as being strikingly impressive from their beauty, and much like those which I had seen in the portraits and on the statues of Oriental nymphs and goddesses of antiquity. Her hair, of raven lustre, was plaited and wreathed on her head, where it was bound with ribbons of bright and grave colours mingled, and held by a comb, and thence dividing, fell in graceful locks over her shoulders, and below her bosom. She was on her knees, sipping broth from a china basin, and with a silver spoon. I accosted the party with the usual salutation of "good morning," to which the man and the two women replied. We chatted as I stood there respecting various matters, as the road, the weather, fellow wayfarers whom I had met, and things of that kind, and in the course of our conversation the man informed me that my best way to Leicester would be through Welford, and not through Market Harborough, which was the more common route. After satisfying my curiosity as well as I could consistently with a decent observation, I bade them good-bye, and was coming away when the mistress of the party, or queen, as I may call her, asked me if a mess of broth would be acceptable. I had been thinking before that never had broth smelled so temptingly as this did; I therefore expressed my thankful acceptance of her offer, and taking a seat on the sod I partook of a breakfast such as I had little expected to find at such a table, for besides the broth, the young nymph, by direction of the queen, placed before me bread, cold mutton, fowl, cheese, with mustard, and green onion as a relish, so I laid to as freely and as plenteously, according to my wants, as ever did alderman at a corporation feast. My kind entertainers seemed the more pleased the more freely I partook, and after making a most excellent meal, during which I was neither annoyed by many questions, nor embarrassed by ceremony—for they mostly spoke to each other, and that in a language I did not understand—I again expressed my sincere thanks and pursued my journey, deeply interested by the scene I had quitted, and particularly so by the two amazing beauties I had beheld.

Northampton, a garrison town, was the next place through which I had to pass, and as a recruiting party of marines was stationed there—as my friend the gipsy had informed me, though whether or not they had orders to press he could not tell—I waited outside until the quiet hour when people had all gone home from church, and had got seated at their dinners, before I essayed the perilous experiment of walking through. The wished-for time soon came, the bells had all ceased tolling, and the streets were nearly deserted, when I stepped at a leisurely calm pace, as if in no great haste to be gone, along the clear broad causeway of that neat and cleanly town. Everything seemed to my wish ; it was a hot day : the sun glared on the pavement and against the windows ; the blinds and curtains were nearly all closed ; the doors were open to let in air, and I could hear the children laughing, the mothers scolding, and the knives and forks clattering as the good folks were partaking their happy meal. I envied them not, I only wished in my heart that every soul in the place might be compelled to eat, and never cease eating, until I had walked clear and far away of that burning pavement and blistering flag-road ; and in sooth I began to think it certainly would be so, the streets were so quiet, when all at once, pondering as I went, and with my hat pulled over my brow, I found I was approaching a marine, who was crossing me at right angles. I would have given the world if the fellow had only been like the towns-folks, quietly employed with his pudding, instead of being where he was, but I took care not to betray any outward sign of either alarm or dissatisfaction. He was alone, and no other person was in sight, and if he stopped me, and my old protection trick failed, I had nothing to do, but either to out-run him, or knock him down, or both, and so decide the matter. These thoughts, however, and these resolves, which came as quick as a throb, were no sooner present, than, to my surprise as well as satisfaction, the man merely looked at me in an ordinary way, and nodding, said, “ Good voyage, shipmate,” to which I readily replied, “ Good quarters, shipmate,” and each passed on.

And now, as the protection which I have once or twice

mentioned will not be any more alluded to, I may as well explain, that these documents which were given to apprentices, were no protection at all save whilst the apprentice was on board the ship to which he belonged, or if on shore, was engaged in the lawful service of his master. If the navy was greatly short of hands, as in the expedition we passed in Yarmouth Roads, for instance, not only apprentices were seized despite of their protections, but even carpenters and mates of coasting vessels would sometimes be made free with. In my case, therefore, who was absconding from my service, the document, had it been perused, instead of being a protection would have been a detection, inasmuch as it would have required a degree of ingenuity beyond my command to have shown why I, an apprentice on board a coasting vessel on the North Sea, should be found traversing the streets of St. Albans, or of Northampton, the king's veritable *terra firma*—instead of being on his other element, the ocean.

This escapade was a great relief to my mind, since having now passed this second garrison town I had not much fear of being interfered with by press-gangs, though, wherever there was a party of marines it was possible that I might be questioned. The weather was, as I have intimated, that of a truly English summer's day. Towards evening, when the heat was mitigated to a joyous coolness, came a breeze that swept odours from the wild rose and the honey-bine. Then, by the hill-sides, or along the valleys, or up the meadow paths, appeared young and happy couples, the lads in their clean smock-frocks, and the lasses in their new pumps, smart caps and ribbons, and all seemingly so full of happy, contented, and hopeful love, that the tears dimmed my eyes as I looked towards them. "Ah!" I thought, "and will not I be walking with one as dear and as bonny as any of them before long." And thus as I wandered forward waned that sweet Sabbath eve, and small indeed was the amount of "cash in my locker," wherewith to procure a lodging, but on I went, and I must have passed some seven or eight miles beyond Welsford, when it being nearly dark, I stopped at a good-looking publichouse, and after paying for a glass of beer,



which took nearly the last copper I had, I asked the landlord if there was not a snug corner in his stable or hay-loft in which I could be allowed to rest till morning? He said the cattle all slept and pastured out, and he had not so much as a lap of straw on the premises; but if I would walk on a couple of miles or so, I should arrive at a place called Wigston, where the yearly feast was being held, and if I only got amongst the young fellows there, I would have all I wanted, and that too for nothing. So thus discouraged in one respect, and encouraged in another, I again commenced my journey, and walked a long way, the eve settling into darkness, and not a glimmer from a house, nor the bark of a sheep-dog, nor any other indication of inhabitants to be seen or heard. I kept on in this way until I became quite tired, and looked in vain for some barn, or outhouse, or cattle-shed, in which I might lay down, but not a vestige of cattle or cattle-shed was to be seen. Not even the tinkle of a sheep-bell could be heard in that vast stillness. At length I thought I espied something like swathes of grass on the other side of a low fence, and climbing over, I found them to be what I expected. I straightway therefore commenced making my bed, and collecting a number of swathes together I lay down on part of them, and pulled the remainder over me until I was pretty well covered, and so, with a bunch under my head for a pillow, and my hat for a sleeping cap, I bade good-night to one star which hung winking above, and in a moment care was no more. When I awoke it was broad day, and the lark was singing overhead. I jumped up, shook off the dewy grass and clover, and thanking God for so excellent a bed, with freedom, I leaped over the fence, and pursued my journey.

It was now evident that unless I could hit upon some plan whereby I could procure sustenance on the road, my travels must soon cease. My last penny had been expended that morning in the purchase of a cake, and I had not a single halfpenny towards carrying me eighty-six miles. As for having recourse to dishonest means, that never entered my thoughts, whilst to beg I could not yet bemean myself. Something, however, must be devised, and as I wore under my



trousers a pair of stout woollen drawers, nearly new, I concluded on selling them, if I could meet with a customer ; and accordingly I went over the hedge into a quiet little corner, and stripped off my drawers, tying them up in a small pocket handkerchief which I had taken care to preserve. I was so entirely satisfied with this proceeding, so easy with respect to present means of subsistence, that I fell into a profound sleep, and so continued during a considerable time. On arriving at Leicester, I stopped at a clothes shop, at the door of which an elderly female stood, of a very decent appearance. I accosted her, and entering the shop, offered her my drawers on sale. She examined them, and asked how much I expected for them ? Well, I said, I should not be very particular, but I thought they would be cheap at two shillings.

"Two shillings !" said the dame—her keen eyes fixed upon me—"Why, young man, I would not give two shillings for all the clothes you have on your back."

I said I was sorry to hear her say that, but how much would she give then.

"You are a sailor I suppose."

"I am, or at least have been," I replied.

"I have a son that is a sailor also," she said.

"I wish him a safe return then," I replied.

"Aye, a safe return, with plenty of prize money," she quickly added.

"Be it as you wish," I replied.

"Are you going to see your friends ?" she asked.

"I'm going to stay with them I hope."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do," said the dame. "I'll just give you sixpence for the drawers, and that's what I call dealing handsomely with you."

"Could you not give me something more, mother," I said, trying to soften her by that tender appellation, though but with small hope of success.

"Not one half-farthing more shall I give, if you talk till night," said the dame, "and if I ever get the money back again, I shall be lucky."

I still chaffered with her, trying to obtain a small advance, but it was of no use, and considering that I might dodge round the whole town and be no better, I resigned the drawers.

"Where's the napkin they were tied in?" she asked.

"It's here I replied," showing it.

"Oh," she said, "I must have that you know, I bid at the whole lot."

My anger was equalled only by my disgust—the little napkin was very dear to me—and taking up the drawers I was about replacing them in the napkin with a view to leave the shop, when judging as I supposed my purpose, she threw down a sixpence, saying, "Give me the drawers: if you were my own son I could not behave better to you."

I first secured the sixpence, and, then putting down the drawers, said, "God help the son who has such a mother as you to come to," and left the place.

My next business was to buy a small loaf, which I soon did, and eat it with a voracious appetite as I went on my way. I proceeded down the street and out of the town without being once annoyed by the appearance of either marine or recruiting party. I passed through Montsorrel and Loughborough without stopping, and took my rest and a draught of porter at a small publichouse beyond the latter place. After this, towards evening, I met a company of women coming from the hayfield; they were disposed to be merry, and dancing and singing with their forks and rakes on their shoulders, they formed a ring around me. At length one of the youngest of them sung a snatch of a popular song:

"I will be sure to return back again  
If I go ten thousand miles, my dear,  
If I go ten thousand miles."

They next produced a keg and a basket, and the kind creatures made me sit down amidst them, and partake of their brown bread and hard cheese, which I did heartily, and quenched my thirst with a good draught of their home-brewed

ale, after which, with many thanks on my part, and kind wishes on theirs, we separated.

If I could have made up my mind to begging, here had been a fine opportunity for trying my talents in that line on these kind and sisterly beings, but I could not find in my heart to inform them how sorely I was distressed: and though I knew that unless I either solicited relief on the road, or some unforeseen assistance came to hand, I must at least endure two days of horrible starvation and fatigue, I could not humble myself to the act of craving charity. So still cherishing a kind of irrational and gloomy hope beyond hope—whilst my benefactors returned to their cheerful and welcome homes, I advanced into the shades of evening, and the grey and solemn stillness of a summer's night had enshrouded all around when I arrived at the village of Shardlow.

At one little window only could I see a blinking light. I knocked at the door, and it was opened; an old couple who were preparing to retire to rest seemed somewhat alarmed at my entrance, so I hastened to make known to them that I was a stranger on the road, and would thank them to direct me either to a hayrick or a cattle-shed, where I could find shelter for the night. They commiserated the hardship of my lot in being necessitated to ask such a question, and directed me to a stable connected with a publichouse a little farther on the way, the residents of which would probably be gone to bed. I thanked the old folks, and without much trouble found out the house and the stable alluded to. All was dark and silent around; the stable was quite unoccupied, and not a straw, nor a lock of hay could I find within the place. I tried to make the manger my sleeping berth—not without a grateful remembrance of the one at Bethlehem—but I could not fit my shoulders to the trough, and sleep being denied me there, I lay down on the bare pavement below, thinking, carnal though I was, that if the manger once served as a bed for a heavenly Lord, the stones beneath one might even suffice for a wandering sinner like me; and so I stretched my wearied limbs on the floor and fell asleep. In the morning I rose as refreshed as if my bed had been one of down, and leaving my sleeping



apartment in as tidy a condition as I found it, I quietly shut the door after me, and continued my journey. I spent my last penny in the purchase of a cake as I entered Derby, and as penny cakes were rather small concerns in those days, mine was quickly devoured.

I passed through the town without stopping, and soon found myself once more amid the beautiful scenery of which our island is so rife. After walking a mile or two I overtook a little crabbed-looking middle-aged man, who, notwithstanding that he limped on one foot, and travelled with a stick, got over the ground rather cleverly. I soon found out that he was a stay and corset-maker by trade, was a great professor of religion, and was going to Manchester, as he said, to pick up a penny in the way of business, and "to speak a word to the heathen," when opportunity offered. And now, I thought to myself, if this man has only money enough about him to carry us both to Manchester, and will undertake to provide for me on the way, I shall look upon him as one sent by Divine providence. I was not long in ascertaining that he had the means to assist me, and then, in return for his communication, I gave him a short history of my adventures, without letting him know the whole truth, and concluded by a proposal that as we were both journeying to one town, we should keep company, and that he should furnish the means for my very frugal subsistence till we arrived there, when I would introduce him to my friends, who would thank him for his kindness, and amply repay him besides. The prospect of turning a good penny on the road appeared, from the manner in which I stated the case, so plain and certain, that the little man assented to the proposal, and we jogged on to Ashborne, where he paid for a basin of milk, and a pennyworth of bread for each, and this was our breakfast. Soon after leaving Ashborne, we fell into company with a private of light dragoons, going home on furlough. At first his presence was not very agreeable to me, but I soon had reason to conclude that he had not, for the present at least, any designs of entrapping me, so we three journeyed together. We now began to mount the hills over which we had to pass to Buxton, and a long, dreary twenty-



four miles the journey would be, as I was given to understand. The day was very hot, and I required refreshment in order to enable me to support the heat and fatigue, but I found my commissary was not going to be at all prodigal of supplies. In walking about ten miles he paid for one gill of sorry treacle beer only, and shortly afterwards, finding I could not keep pace with my comrades, I sat down on a knoll by the roadside, and they went forward, disappearing over the long moors. After some time, having got a draught of blessed water at a little rill, I made an essay to proceed, and had not gone far ere I arrived at a large inn and posting-house called New Haven. A haven it was indeed to me. I asked one of the stable men for permission to lie down on the hay-baulks, which he civilly granted, and there I remained sleep-bound until far in the afternoon. On awaking I set forward again, quite refreshed and in good spirits, and was the more anxious to get to Buxton since I should then be only twenty-two miles from home, a distance which I thought I should be able to walk with the refreshment of water only, should chance not throw in my way a particle of solid food. Encouraged thus by the consciousness of being almost on the verge of my native county, and of being now traversing the tops of some of those hills which I had so often contemplated from our play-ground at Middleton, I stepped forward with a light heart, over a country of waste and cheerless moors, and of rolling, billowy hills. Though greatly fatigued, as much probably from the heat of the three last days as from the want of food, I continued, with many cheering anticipations, to urge my feeble steps in the direction of my hoped-for resting-place for the night, though God only knew what sort of a resting-place that was to be. Another opportunity now occurred for my asking charity, and I made up my mind to do it. It was a secluded place in the bottom of a valley. I was descending one side, and a gentleman, mounted and walking his horse at a quiet pace, was coming down the other. We met nearly at the bottom, and I looked at him and lifted my hat, but when my hand should have been extended, and the words of supplication should have passed my lips, I could not do either the one or the other, and the

gentleman, merely nodding in return to my civility, passed on.

Shortly after this I began to feel sickly ; my head became confused, and I sat down merely as I thought to rest and take breath, but I probably fainted, since when consciousness returned night had completely set in. I however got up as well as I could, and again put my now stiffened limbs in motion, and had not proceeded more than a mile ere I became aware that I was approaching numerous habitations, and pressing forward I was soon at the entrance into the village of Buxton.

My first endeavour was to discover, if I could, a stable or outhouse of some sort, in which I could take up my lodgings—the last of the sort which I should want on my present journey. I had not hovered about the street long ere I espied a ladder reared against what appeared to be a hay-loft, so I crept up as daintily as if I had been mounting to a curtained bed of down, and found to my great joy that I was on a boarded floor, well stored with hay. Here, then, was my bed at once, and now all my troubles were over. I was groping about for a place to make my bed, when, as sudden as a flash, I fell through the floor, and found myself lying on my back in a lower place. I was rather confused at first, and scarcely conscious of what had happened, but was soon made aware that something was vastly wrong by screams of murder, with occasional prayers and imprecations. Presently a door opened, and several men entered the place with lights, when I found that I was lying in the stall of a stable, with my legs across the body of a female, who continued making a great noise, and whose dress was not in the most decorous condition. Though shaken by the fall and still confused, I immediately got upon my feet, when one of the men, holding a lanthorn to my face, demanded to know why I brought my strumpet into his stable. In vain I protested that I knew nothing whatever of the woman. He insisted that I did, and that probably I should have laid hands on other game also if I had found anything worth carrying away. To this insinuation I had no reply save a repetition of the assertion that I was innocent, and I added that I only became aware that any living being was in the

place by the accident of falling through the hole in the floor above, which I pointed out, and also stated my motive for going there. By this time the woman had risen from the straw, and was busy arranging her dress.

"Why," said one of the men, "is not that the girl that has been in company with the limping fellow and the soldier all night?"

"The very same," said another.

"Oh! I see how it is," rejoined a third—"where is the old fox concealed? he has not been in the tap-room since this woman left it."

"He's somewhere in the place," said one of the men.

"He'll be found not far off," said another.

Instantly they began to search, when a slight noise in the next stall led them to look that way, and they discovered a pair of legs sticking out from under some straw.

Straight that hunting note which is raised on the taking of a fox was shouted by half-a-dozen voices, and seizing the legs, they pulled out my little lame friend, the stay and corset maker, with whom I joined company that morning.

"Here he is, sure enough," said one of the men, when they had done shouting.

"The old dog bagged alive," said another.

"Well, how has this come about?" asked the owner of the place. "What account can you give of yourselves?" he continued.

Here a scene and a dialogue ensued, which, however diverting it might be to those present, I will take the liberty to omit from my narrative. Suffice it to say, that the landlord cleared the place, locked the door, and put the key in his pocket, the whole of the party, the woman excepted, entering the public-house to which the stable was attached, and from whence the greater part of them had issued on hearing the noise. Here several persons were drinking, smoking, and singing in a kind of kitchen or family room, and amongst them, drunk and nearly asleep, was my other fellow traveller of the morning, the young dragoon. The stay-maker was now sadly bantered on account of his adventure, and at last, in order to make his peace with



the landlord and the company, he paid for a quart of hot ale and gin, of which I took one or two small glässes, though I would much rather have had something to eat.

After I had sat in this company a considerable time, weary and longing for repose, I espied an opportunity to slip out of the place, and again mounting the ladder to the hay-loft, I made sure of not falling through that time. Quickly was I oblivious of all care, and did not awaken until the morning was far advanced. On descending from my bed I inquired about the soldier and the stay-maker, and being informed that they had started three hours before, I turned my steps through the village and followed them.

Wearily, and rather faintly, though with a good heart, I mounted the hills which enclose Buxton on the Lancashire side, and then, with greater ease, I began to descend the long road down to Whaley Bridge, my only refreshment being now and then a draught of water from the small mountain rills which trickled through their rock channels on the moors. After passing Whaley Bridge I began to ascend, slowly enough, the steep old road to Disley. The day was again very hot, and when I had mounted this hard path of the olden time to a considerable distance, I rested on a stone wall opposite some cottages, at the door of one of which I soon espied an old woman winding bobbins. I asked her for a draught of water, when she immediately rose to oblige me, and brought forth a basin of delicious butter-milk. I thanked her most gratefully, and as I stood leaning against the doorpost, much fatigued, she asked if I could eat some oaten cake, and on my saying I could with pleasure, she invited me to come in and sit down, and speedily presented me with half of a good substantial cake, baked thick and without being riddled. I quickly dispatched the cake, when the old woman—a fine-looking old mother she was—casting on me a glance of womanly feeling said, “Bless me, lad—for thou art somebody’s lad, I dare say—thou hast been famished, almost dying of hunger, I’m sure; couldst thou eat another piece of cake?” I said I could, and informed her that this was the first food I had tasted since I left Ashborne the morning previous. She



accordingly gave me the other half of the cake, part of which I ate, and the remainder, with some cheese, she made me put in my pocket as a snack on the road.

Blessings on the memory of that kind old woman ! I thought she was much like what I remembered of my own mother, only more aged. I stole many a look at her as she moved about the house. Blessings be ever with her memory !

After leaving this cottage, refreshed and somewhat rested, I was soon at Disley, and from thence I passed through Bullock Smithy \* and Stockport to Manchester, where I arrived at dusk, and took up my quarters at the house of a friend until night had set in, when I visited my father and other relations, and was received by them with a joyful welcome. I thought it rather strange, however, that they expressed not any surprise at my return, and on further conversation I learned that my kind friend, the little staymaker, had visited them the same day, and had prepared them for my coming. He had made them quite easy respecting my condition, having told them that he had advanced me money sufficient to carry me home comfortably, and that I was coming on at my leisure. The rascal was consequently very well received by them, and went away trebly repaid for what he said he had advanced to me. My father, however, though he abhorred the fraud and the deception, said, " Never mind the money, ' My son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found.' "

And now, if we would derive a benefit beyond the mere amusement which the perusal of this book may afford, we should here pause and survey that career of life which I had lately been pursuing, and then note down the events which followed from it. The dangers, the hardships which I had undergone, and many of them I have not set down, not liking to amplify on such matters, were only the natural results of a course of parental disobedience, and a disregard of conscientious warnings, which, like good angels, would have turned me from the path of error—of sin—but I would not.

From such a course what could be expected save a retaliation of evil for the evil I had committed ; for as surely as night

\* Now Hazel Grove.

succeeds day, as certainly as death comes after life, so inevitably does good beget good, and sin produce misery. Let the reader then, the youthful one especially, who seeks to benefit by the reading of this book, note what, in my case, followed a vicious irregularity of living ; and then, if he would escape providential chastisement, let him, with a steady determination, eschew evil, on the track of which chastisement quickly follows, and is never turned aside.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### WAREHOUSE WORK AGAIN—READINGS—CATHERINE.

HAVING now had enough of an unsettled life, at least for the present, I endeavoured to obtain constant employment, and a regular situation, in a warehouse, and shortly I got an engagement in that of Messrs. Hole, Wilkinson, and Gartside, an eminent printing concern, whose works were at Cross Hall, near Chorley, and whose sale warehouse was in Peel Street, Manchester. Here my business was to unlock the warehouse at morning, to kindle a fire in the counting-house during winter, to sweep the floor, to dust down the desks and tables, and generally to make the place tidy and comfortable against the arrival of the book-keepers and my employers. My next morning's job was to sweep the floors of the sale-rooms, to dust the counters, benches, and shelves, to lay all the prints straight, and place them in regular piles according to their several sorts. My own place, the packing-room on the upper floor, was next to be swept and made ready for work ; and the like having been done to a small print-room adjoining, I either took a seat in the counting-house until relieved by the book-keeper, or I remained at my own desk in this upper storey. This desk was a snug concern, or at least so I deemed it. It was furnished with writing materials, convenient drawers and recesses ; a ruler, a penknife, a folding-up slate and pencil, and on it were deposited a file, with notes from the sale-room of every parcel of goods which I had to deliver or pack ; a book in which every parcel or pack which had to go by carrier was entered and signed for by him ; and a smaller book in which

were noted down, and duly signed for, every parcel of goods which was delivered in Manchester. Such was the routine of my duty on three mornings in the week, and such the place of retirement which was my own peculiar right when not called to action by the requirements of my situation.

My employers were George Hole, a son of an extensive farmer near Newark-on-Trent, who managed the selling department of the concern at this Manchester warehouse; John Wilkinson, a manufacturer, who attended to the buying of the cloth necessary for the concern; and Henry Gartside, a first-rate practical printer, who managed that branch of the business with great ability. On the mornings of Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, the warehouse was opened at seven o'clock; and on the three market mornings of Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, it was opened at six o'clock. By half-past six a large cart, drawn by two stout horses, would be at the door. Before seven, Mr. Hole and Mr. M., the salesman, would have arrived, and would probably find from a dozen to a score of country drapers chatting and walking about in the counting-house, the lobby, and the sale-room. Exactly at seven o'clock the sheets were thrown off the cart, and the delivery commenced. Mr. M. counted the pieces by twenties, and placing them on my shoulder I carried them upstairs, and threw them down on a clean white cloth, which was spread on the floor of the sale-room. A scramble then commenced amongst the buyers which should get the most pieces; sometimes they met me at the sale-room door and tore them off my back; and many a good coat have I seen slit up, or left with the laps dangling, after a struggle of that sort. The pieces having all been delivered in this manner, the old carter drove off to put his horses up, whilst Mr. M. hastened to assist in the sale-room, and I, from a wish to be as useful as I could to my employers, also attended, handing pieces to the customers, and now and then taking occasion respectfully to point out a piece which was a better one than common. For having naturally a taste for objects of a beautiful or striking description, I soon acquired a tolerably correct judgment of prints also; and though I made not any parade of my talent, I had



not been accustomed to prints long ere I could form a rather sure guess whether or not a style of work would sell. Such was a print delivery and a morning's sale at a Manchester warehouse in the year 1808.

The pieces which had been selected were left doubled up, piled in lots, and ticketed with the name of the buyer. Mr. Hole and Mr. M. would then go to breakfast, and if a buyer who had missed the delivery came in, I showed him the prints which were left, when he selected what he approved of, gave his name, and I piled and ticketed them the same as the former lots were.

By this time the book-keeper would have arrived, and I went to breakfast, and on my return would be despatched to the post-office for letters. The way-bill of articles wanted for the works was next put into my hand, and I went round to the chemists, the drysalters, the block-makers, the engravers, or to any other parties who had to supply materials to go back by the cart, and ordered whatever was required. I next delivered all lots of prints purchased by Manchester houses, or ordered to be left with them for package with other goods. The cart was next loaded for its return, and by the time that was despatched the old church bell would have dropped ringing one o'clock, and the doors were then locked and we went to dinner. At two o'clock we again opened, and I commenced my afternoon's work by carrying up to my packing room the first lot of prints that, having been entered in the day-book, was ready for being sent off. That lot having been packed, or trussed, and neatly marked—at which feat I soon became no common hand—the other lots were successively made up in their respective forms, and, having been entered in the carrier's book, were duly signed for by him, and sent to their several destinations. By this time it would probably be five or six o'clock in the evening, and the goods which had been ordered for that day having been all disposed of, our employers would retire at tea-time, and at six, after I had carefully raked out the fire, closed the shutters of the counting-house, and walked round the rooms to see that all was right, I and the book-keeper—if he was present—locked up the warehouse, and I

took the keys to Mr. Hole's residence in Faulkner Street, and so terminated my employment for the day.

I have been thus particular in describing the transactions of one market day, inasmuch as that description may suffice for those of any other market day of the busy seasons of spring and autumn, when new patterns and styles of prints were produced in the market; and inasmuch also as that I am rather of opinion that morning sales, like the one I have described, are no longer known in Manchester, nor ever will be again.

I was well satisfied with my situation, and used my best endeavours to please my employers, and to promote their interest in every way which my humble condition permitted. Nor were they unmindful of my exertions, and I had not been long in their service before they voluntarily advanced my wages from eighteen to twenty shillings a week. This was a great encouragement to me, since it gave me to understand in a most pleasing manner that my endeavours were appreciated. I continued those endeavours, and in a short time my wages were increased to a guinea a week.

As spring and autumn were our only really busy seasons, I had occasionally, during other parts of the year, considerable leisure, which, if I could procure a book that I considered at all worth the reading, was spent with such book at my desk in the little recess of the packing-room. Here, therefore, I had opportunities for reading many books of which I had only heard the names before, such as Robertson's "History of Scotland," Goldsmith's "History of England," Rollin's "Ancient History," Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Anacharsis's "Travels in Greece," and many other works on travel, geography, and antiquities. I also enlarged my acquaintance with English literature, read Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," and, as a consequence, many of their productions also. Macpherson's "Ossian," whilst it gave me a glimpse of our most ancient lore, interested my feelings and absorbed my attention. I also bent my thoughts on more practical studies, and at one time had nearly the whole of Lindley Murray's "Grammar" stored in my memory, although I never so far

benefited by it as to become ready at parsing. A publication of a different description also fell in my way. Mr. Hole was a reader of *Cobbett's Weekly Register*, and as I constantly saw the tract lying on the desk at the beginning of the week, I at length read it, and found within its pages far more matter for reflection than, from its unattractive title and appearance, I had expected to find there. The nervous and unmistakable English of that work there was no withstanding. I thenceforth became as constant a reader of Cobbett's writings as was my master himself, and was soon, probably, a more ardent admirer of his doctrines than was my employer. As I generally attended the counting-house when the book-keeper and salesman were absent—unless called out by other employment—I had many opportunities for these perusals. I seldom indeed failed to examine whatever book I found upon the desk, and if I happened to be left to lock up at noon, which would sometimes be the case, I would hasten to the next shop and buy a cold lunch for dinner, thence return to the warehouse and lock myself in, that I might have an opportunity for examining some book which had attracted my attention. And in this way, during nearly all the four years which I passed in the employ of this firm, I continued to examine or to read every book which fell in my way, or which I could readily procure.

Such was the manner in which I was employed whilst with Messrs. Hole, Wilkinson, and Gartside, namely, alertly busy during two months each of spring and autumn; occasionally busy at other times; and with a comparatively small amount of warehouse labour during the remainder of the year. Our early openings gave us a good start of the day; everything was understood and done promptly, and when our neighbours were hurrying and packing to get ready for the carriers, we, having cleared all off, would probably be closing the warehouse. Very rarely indeed did we stay after six o'clock; not unfrequently did we close at half-past five, and sometimes we shut up at five. I then went to my lodgings, got tea, washed and put on some better clothing, and spent the evening either in a country walk or a stroll in the town. Those were some of the



most satisfactory days which I had experienced during a long time.

Not unfrequently my evening walks would extend as far as Middleton, for the separation which ensued on my going to sea had not in the least degree diminished my regard for the dear object of my affection, whilst on her part it seemed only to have increased her attachment. Again, therefore, we had our walks through the leas of Hopwood or Middleton. Sometimes, on fine Sunday afternoons, we would ramble as far as the wood-crowned Tandles—ancient fire-hills—and descending by their romantic footpaths into the sunny valley, and thence through the shadowy, mysterious, old Druid-haunted wood, returned to Middleton at the closing of another blessed day, my heart repeating, in reference to the scene in Northamptonshire, “Ah! and have not I been walking, as I thought I would, with one as dear and as bonny as the best of them!”

Having heard that one of my fellow apprentices on ship-board had returned, and was living at Cheetham Hill, I took an opportunity for going over there, in order to find him out. At the door of a small cottage, the site of which is now enclosed in a shrubbery, stood an old woman whom I thought I must have seen before. I looked again, and who should she be but the mother of my once dear Catherine; but oh, how altered! aged, attenuated, and sadly humble in her apparel; humble in the material, but still proud and particular in its cleanness and the formality of its adjustment. I at once determined to speak to her, and as a pretence for so doing I crossed over the highway, and asked her if she could inform me where the person I was in search of lived? With a quick and inquisitive look, which I seemed not to notice, she scanned me over, and said she did not know the person I was asking about.

Lingering a moment till my look met hers, I said, in affected surprise—

“Surely I should know your features; are not you Mrs. W. who once lived at a farm in Crumpsall?”

“I am,” she replied.



"And will you permit me to ask one question, which I assure you is not prompted by curiosity, but arises from a sincere respect for the person I would ask about?"

Here I heard a slight coughing within the cottage, and the old woman leaned her arm, which was now tremulous, against the door-frame.

"What is your question, young man?" asked she.

"I wish to know how your daughter Catherine is?" I replied.

"Catherine is very poorly," said the old woman; and looking at me again, "does Catherine know you?" she asked.

"She did know me once," I said, "and I think she cannot have quite forgotten me yet."

"I think I know now who you are," she said, with a more satisfied manner.

"Perhaps you do; I have no objection that you should know me," I said. "But pray, where is Catherine then, if she is so poorly?"

"She is here," replied the old woman.

"Might I be allowed to speak to her?"

"Yes," said the dame, "there cannot be any harm in that now. Only"—whispering in my ear—"do not speak loud, nor say anything that may fluster her, or put her out of the way."

"God forbid," I said, entering the cottage with a careful step.

Catherine was seated in a low chair near the fire, a pillow was behind her head, and her left arm rested on another, which lay on a white table, on which also were a prayer-book, open, another small book or two, and some fruit.

The moment I entered the room there was a brightening in her eye, and a flushing on her cheek, but instantly, seeming to check herself, she appeared calm, and motioned me to come near.

The old woman placed a chair for me, on that side of the table where her arm lay, and doffing my hat, and wiping my forehead, and eyes also by the way, I sat down, and taking her hand gently in mine, I said—

"Dear Catherine, I am truly grieved at seeing you so unwell."

"Ah, Samuel!" she said, "are you come at last? I did not expect this; I dared not hope for it."

"Why not, dear Catherine?"

"I thought you were too happy elsewhere ever to think of me."

"Indeed, I have been very happy, and very unhappy also, but I have never ceased to love you as a sister—as a dear friend."

"That is quite enough," she said, "since I have now no love to bestow, save that for my Redeemer."

"Are you happy?" I asked.

"I am," she replied, "very happy. I know that my time in this world is short, and I am prepared for the change, but I wished to see you, God permitting, and now you are come at last, and I shall have done with things of this world."

"Dear Catherine," I said, "I am glad that I have come then."

She then desired me to state particularly how it happened that I was in the company of the young woman with whom she last saw me at Manchester; and I thereupon narrated the circumstances exactly as they occurred. She then said she was satisfied, for that my account corresponded in every particular with that given by the girl herself. I asked her if she had seen the girl, and she said she had met her one day, some time since, on the road to Manchester. The girl was travelling with wares in a basket, and she having become a customer, led the girl into conversation, and at length asked her if she remembered coming down the Mill Gate with a young man, and being led by him into a cook-shop. The girl, she said, at once acknowledged the fact, and gave the same account of the circumstance which I had done. And now, Catherine said, she had only to ask my forgiveness for having thought wrongfully, and perhaps injuriously of me.

I said I had nothing to forgive her for, but if she wished me to say the words, why then I as freely forgave her as I hoped to be forgiven. She said we had both been sufferers. That

dangerous old sibyl in whom she had placed her confidence had misrepresented my actions, and abused her too easy belief. But it was now all over, and she had only to implore me to prepare for the same great change which she had shortly to undergo. Sooner or later I should have to come to the same state, and I should then find it a blessed thing so

“ To have lived that I might dread  
The grave as little as my bed.”

I asked her if she was quite prepared for the change. “ Oh ! quite prepared,” she said, “ blessed be my Redeemer.”

She leaned back, rather exhausted. Her mother motioned me not to speak any more. Catherine gave me her hand again. I felt the pressure of her burning fingers, and placing them reverentially to my lips, I intimated that I would shortly come again, and withdrew. On my second visit, with a small present of fruit and confectionery, Catherine was too ill to speak, but she knew me, and held out her hand. Her cheeks kept blushing and paling, and her eyes were almost painfully brilliant. On my third visit she was in her coffin, shrouded and knotted with white love-ribbon, and decked with sweet herbs and flowers. Her mother stood weeping behind the curtain, and the attendants were downstairs, so I touched her cold forehead and pale cheek with my lips, and placing one little memorial on her bosom, I took my last look and came away.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### ROBERT BURNS—A WEDDING—A RIOT.

AT the time when I was in the employ of Messrs. Hole, Wilkinson, and Gartside, it was the custom for porters and warehousemen, such as myself, to go round on New Year's Day a Christmas-gifting, to the block-makers, engravers, carriers, and others employed by the firm. On the first New Year's Day of this my servitude, I refused to exercise this privilege, and so lost my Christmas gifts for that year. The porters of the neighbourhood could not comprehend the motives for such an act of disinterestedness and independence; and when we fell into company, which we sometimes did, at Dolly Burton's, who kept an excellent tap at the "Red Lion," in Church Street, I was lucky if I did not hear my self-denial characterised in disparaging terms. They said I could be nothing less than a fool, to miss a legal and honest chance of putting a pound or two into my pocket, for the trouble of a forenoon's walk; and they talked to me so, that, in sooth, I began myself to think I was not so bright about the head as some folks. Accordingly, the next New Year's Day I went with two others on that, to me, distasteful errand, and in about three hours I had pocketed thirty shillings. But I resolved never to go again. There was so much humiliation mixed up with the thing, that though the money was useful, I felt self-reproached when I reflected how it had been obtained. So there was no more New Year's gifting for me.

I think it was about this time that Chatterton's life and poems fell in my way. They interested me very deeply, though I could not help believing that his account of the



Rowley manuscripts was scarcely credible. Burns's life and writings next fell into my hands—Robert Burns, the Scottish ploughman, of whom I had heard mention made so often, and yet, strangely enough, had never read one sentence. Well now the poems, and an account of the manner in which this gifted man wore out his life in this world, were before me. And did I not sit down, beside my quiet desk, under the skylight, and read, or rather compress to my very soul, every word of that precious book? Aye, through, and through, and through again did I note it, line by line, and sentence by sentence. And this man, whom methought I saw before me as plainly as if he had stood there, was Robert Burns, the deathless-named, the world-wide famed Robert Burns. There he was, a tall, stooping, lank-haired, weather-browned, dreamy-eyed, God-crowned, noble-minded ploughman. And this, too, was of his writing, of his soul uttering; this “Lass o’ Ballochmoyle” was one strain of his never-dying melody! If this be really so—if this be indeed his poetry—what can these sensations possibly be, which awaken within me whenever I read a true poet’s verse; these strange and undefined emotions which have brooded over my heart ever since I knew what love and poetry were. If these expressed sensations of the noble poet peasant constituted his imperishable wreath, what could these unexpressed but somewhat identical feelings of mine be, save poetry without the form—a spirit without the body. What then, methought, if I tried to throw them into form? what if I dared an essay to give them utterance in verse? Burns thereat looked kindly—or so I dreamed—and with a sweet, strong voice said encouragingly, “Try mon, and fear not.” So I tried, and the result was such that when vanity whispered, “I also am a poet,” I knew not that it was vanity; and from that time I became an occasional writer of verse.

So greatly was I pleased with the character of Burns that in accepting him as an example I made a too faint distinction betwixt his genius and his failings, and in striving to emulate the one I sometimes fell into an imitation of the other, which was quite a different thing. My visits to Dolly Burton’s became more frequent, after warehouse time, and were occa-

sionally prolonged beyond the limits of sober refreshment. A few clerks, tradesmen, and some of the better sort of porters, used to meet in the little parlour there, and after discussing the news of the town, or of the nation, during which pipes and glasses were replenished pretty freely, and joke and banter were not spared, singing would commence, and a strange thing would it have been indeed had it terminated without

“ Wha first shall rise to gang awa,  
A cuckold coward loon is he ;  
Wha first beside his chair does fa,  
He shall be king amang us three.”

But then, Mother Burton's ale was of so excellent a tap, and she was so kindly an old landlady, at once discreet and obliging, that we respected her as much as we liked her ale, and there might be something in that also which detained us. But whatever was the cause of our frequent meetings, whether the ale, or the landlady, or the music, or all together, it would be greatly probable indeed, that before we separated a couple or two of our cronies would be in a condition to enact Shanter or Souter Johnny on their way home.

I was not so unreflective as not to perceive to what this course must inevitably tend, and with a view to put an end to it at once, I resolved to marry. This was the more likely to be effected without much difficulty, inasmuch as my courtship had been duly paid, and it was long now since my intended fair had entertained any other expectation than the one I now purposed to accomplish. So one forenoon, when she came to Manchester on an errand, I asked leave out of the warehouse for an hour, and having met her at a place appointed, we proceeded to a goldsmith's shop, and I contrived to fit her neat finger with a ring, worth nine shillings, which she folded in tissue paper, and then in another paper, and next wrapped in a huzzif, tying it round and round with the tape band, and next placed it in a pocket-book which she carefully folded and conveyed to the very deepest recess of her pocket, feeling again, to make sure that it was there. This important business being

settled, I helped her to mount her little tit Trim, bade her good-bye for the present, and seeing her off at a trot towards home, I returned to my work, happy in the certainty that when I was wed, I should have a wife who would create for me an ever-welcome home.

The banns had been duly published, the day agreed upon, and all was ready. So I made an appointment with my friend Booth to rise early on Sunday morning, and take a good swim in the river before I went to meet my bride and her friends. Booth and I were up betimes, and as speedily in the water at Sandy Well, luxuriating in the cool element most gleesomely, when what should start us from our enjoyment but the sound of the old church bell ringing seven o'clock, within a quarter of an hour of the very time at which we should have met Mima and her company at Harpurhey. We had been mistaken in the time an hour. So we put on our clothes, and hastened towards the place appointed, but before we arrived there we espied the party coming on the road, and meeting them, we all came to Manchester, in a very good humour, as wedding folks ought to be. After breakfasting at my sister's in Greengate, where I lodged, we proceeded to the Old Church, and lo! when the ring was produced, the bride's finger was so swollen with walking, that the ring could not be passed over the joint. The minister, who was the Reverend Joshua Brooks, seeing that the ring was not placed according to custom, began, as he read the service, to thumb it with his nail, in order to force it over. I was afraid he would hurt the dear little woman, and was about to remonstrate, when he suddenly quitted us, and hastening to one side of the communion rails, he gave a boy who stood leaning against them a smart box on the ear, and then, without saying a word, he returned to us. Meantime, in order to prevent his further annoyance, I had taken hold of the whole of the finger, and held it with the ring on in my hand. But he now attempted to thrust my hand away, and tried to commence forcing the ring up again.

"Let the ring go over," he said.

"It can't go further," I replied, "her finger is swelled."



"It can go further, and it shall go further," said the irritable little being, and I, almost as irritable, said quickly, "It sha'n't go further."

"Oh; very well," then observed he, "stand down, you are not man and wife until I have bestowed the benediction."

"Benediction? indeed!" thought I, "a blessed benediction it must be that has to pass those lips."

However we stood back, and as he had finished the ceremony for us, except the benediction, he went through the same form with four or five other couples, after which the clerk ordered us all to kneel down; we of course kneeled with the others, and the benediction having been bestowed indiscriminately, we rose from our knees, and I suppose each bridegroom did as I did, for there was a sound of kisses in the place.

"How stupid you were," said the reverend personage, when we went into the vestry to sign the registers, and to pay the fees—No, I had forgotten, the fees were paid beforehand—"How stupid you were," said he, "not to let the ring go on the finger."

"The ring was on the finger," I said.

"Yes, but not properly; not over the joint."

"That is not required," I said. "Besides, the finger was swollen, and it was painful."

"But the ring is over the joint now," said he.

"Yes, but not through your endeavours; and whether it were or not you had no right to interfere in the manner you did. The ring was on the finger, and the form of solemnisation does not require more."

"Pho, pho, man," said he, "sign the book; sign the book."

Both Mimi and I signed the book. Thus we were married, and I was happy.

The morning following, I opened the warehouse, and prepared it as usual, and the remainder of the day was given me to keep my wedding on. Mima and I went to Middleton, and whilst we sat at a merry tea party at my uncle's, a being which was dearest to me of any in the world, save my wife,



was brought in, and presented. A young girl held in her arms a sweet infant, just of age to begin noticing things. It fixed its good-tempered look upon me, smiled, and stretched forth its hands. "Bless thee," I said in my heart—taking it in my arms, and pressing it to my bosom—"Bless thee, my dear babe, though my coming has been late, and after long looking for, I will be a kind father to thee. Yes, though a proud and supercilious world may view with contempt the misfortune of thy birth, the more it disparage thee, the greater shall be my love. Bless thee, my little innocent," and I held it fondly, for my heart yearned towards it. Meanwhile, as if its mother had heard what my heart alone spoke to my child and to God, she sat looking at us through trembling tears. I gave the babe to her, saying kindly, "Dear love, be happy. The fault was mine, and it shall be my life's endeavour to repair it."

Soon after this we commenced housekeeping at Manchester, and a brief period having elapsed, my wife and child again returned to live at Middleton, I generally, in summer time, walking over after warehouse hours; in winter visiting them twice or thrice a week, and always spending my Saturday nights and Sundays at home. I was now a settled family man, serving my employers duly, and, God knows, I can with truth say, that I served them honestly also. My greatest ambition was to please them, and to provide for my family, and as I was tolerably successful in both objects, I was as happy as a mortal need be in this world.

It was about this time, that the authorities and some of the ultra-loyal inhabitants of Manchester made their first grand political mistake, which occurred within the sphere of my observation. Charles Wood, I recollect, was Borough reeve that year, and a placard with—if I mistake not—his name appended, was exhibited, calling on the inhabitants of Manchester and its vicinity to meet in St. Ann's Square, for the purpose of passing a congratulatory address to the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV. On the day appointed there was a large muster of people from the neighbouring towns and villages, and the original concoctors of the measure, fearing

they would not be able to carry it, kept entirely away, and abandoned their intention altogether. The crowd, seeing there was not to be any meeting, formed a ring in the square, and appointed a chairman, and passed some resolutions of a tendency contrary to those originally purposed to be carried. Meantime, groups of people were in other parts beginning to commit excesses. About half a dozen, who from their appearance seemed to be countrymen, accosted a gentleman at the entrance from Exchange Street into the square, and after some opprobrious expressions they laid hands on him, and then began to strike him with sticks which they carried. He tried to escape into some of the shops, but the doors and windows being mostly fastened he was disappointed. The men continued striking him; his hat was knocked off, and on his head, which I saw was a little bald in the front, he received several blows. My feelings and partialities had hitherto been all on the side of the populace, but I could not witness this cowardly outrage without feelings of indignation and disgust. Pushing in amongst them, "For shame, men," I said, and warding off two or three blows, I received several on my arms and shoulders. At that moment, some one in a shop, opening the door, as if to see what was the matter, the gentleman slipped in, and the door was again closed and bolted in an instant.

Just then a great shout was set up near the Exchange, and the whole party hastened off in that direction, I following leisurely. When I got there a number of fellows were throwing chairs, tables, and benches through the windows above the post office, and the furniture being quickly broken up, the fragments were used in smashing the lamps, and front windows of the building. Another party of the mob were in the large room, breaking and destroying everything that stood in their way, or that excited their spirit of mischief. Fragments of tables and chairs were hurled through the windows into the street, and thence back again; the costly chandeliers were shivered to atoms, and at length, a heap of straw was piled up and set on fire. At this juncture the police and a party of the Cumberland militia arrived; the fire was

extinguished, and several of the rioters were taken into custody. A troop or two of the Scots Greys soon afterwards made their appearance, and began clearing the streets, when, it being then warehouse time, I hastened to my work.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### A CRITICISM—MIDDLETON FIGHT—A PARTING—CONCLUSION.

IN the exercise of my talent for verse-making, I had so well pleased myself that at length I determined to test the merit of one of my productions by offering it for publication, in the *Manchester Gazette*. The office of that paper was then at the top of Hunter's Lane, and William Cowdroy was the editor; a gentleman of whom I had a very high opinion, for, though he was rather satirical, and at times, somewhat crusty with his correspondents, he on the whole, evinced an encouraging spirit; at all times he exhibited a quick and just perception, and to his judgment, therefore, was this piece of mine submitted. It was a description, in verse, of my first visit to Oldham, and described in an ironical strain the interior of a cottage at Priest Hill, and scenery in the immediate neighbourhood. It was in the Lancashire dialect, and commenced as follows:—

“ 'Twur on a Sunday afternoon,  
I don'd me shoynin' Sunday shoon,  
An off I seet wi' Jim an' Jack,  
We beawnc'd to Owdham in a crack.”

After the description of the place, which was certainly doggerelish, it concluded with this stanza:—

“ An' neaw yon meawntuns hee and far,  
Curtain'd the god o' day;  
Gone to the west his feyery car,  
An sunk his blazin ray.  
Wi evening mild, we tripp'd the plain,  
An' merrily hied us whom again.”



I put it in the letter box, and on the Saturday following a note to correspondents desired the writer to call at the office. Accordingly, on an evening of the week following, I, in a state of mind betwixt doubt and assurance, called, and was shown into a room, where I awaited the appearance of the literary Solon as if death or fate had depended on the issue. At length he came, a man about sixty years of age; of middle height and somewhat fat and fussy; his complexion was a little rubicund; his nose, with spectacles on it, somewhat snubby; his eyes, as he looked under or over the glasses, grey and piercing; and his general appearance and manner that of one possessing power, and disposed to use it in his own way.

"Well, young man," said he, holding his head back, and looking at me, "what is the business you are come upon?"

I said I was come about a piece of poetry.

"What poetry?" asked he.

"It was a piece entitled 'A Trip to Oldham,' and the writer was requested to call at the office."

"Are you the writer of that?" he asked.

I said I was.

"And how the d——l could you expect that I should give it a place in my paper?"

I said I hardly did expect so much as that, but I hoped to obtain his opinion as to its merits.

"Well, then, my opinion is that it has no merits," he said.

I said I was but a young hand at verse making, and if he would state whether it was the subject, or the manner of treating it, which rendered the piece objectionable, I should feel obliged.

"Oh! both are objectionable; it is trumpery doggerel throughout. Here is your paper, and I hope you will never offer me any more such." Saying which, he took up the candle, and went out of the place, leaving me to grope my way down the lobby and out at the door as well as I could.

Such was the first reception which my verses met with from a Manchester editor. Sorely indeed were my expectations disappointed, and sadly humbled was my ambition, yet I was

not disheartened. "This being a failure," I said to myself, as I was going down Hunter's Lane, "I must e'en try to do better the next time, as many a poor genius has done before me. And notwithstanding what the critic has said, I am as certain as I am of my own existence that there are redeeming passages in the poem. He does not understand it. It is written in a rude dialect. He is testy and out of humour. And besides, he is no Solomon after all." Thus I criticised the critic, and settled the matter, in my way.

One afternoon we were astonished and alarmed at the warehouse by a report which had come into the town that the power-loom manufactory of Messrs. Burton and Sons, at Middleton, had been attacked by a numerous mob, with the intent of destroying the machinery, and that several of the mob had been shot dead, and a number wounded. As soon as we had locked up for the evening, I, of course, hastened off to Middleton, and on my arrival found the report to be true.

About two o'clock on the afternoon of this day (the 20th of April) the inhabitants of the town were surprised by the appearance of numbers of men, many of them armed with sticks and bludgeons, who simultaneously arrived in the town from various districts of the surrounding country. Several provision shops in the upper part of the town were entered and plundered of bread, cheese, bacon, and groceries, and in some instances plunder was prevented by presents of money. The mob seemed to arrive from all parts at once, and the smaller parties having formed into one main body in the turnpike road, the whole proceeded to the lower part of the town, and there joined another large crowd, which seemingly had been waiting for their arrival. In this year—1812—there had been much destruction of machinery in various parts of the manufacturing districts of the kingdom, and when the infatuation spread into Lancashire, the power looms of Messrs. Burton seem to have attracted the early attention and hostility of a great portion of the hand-working operatives, who, by means of secret delegations, held frequent private meetings for the purpose of concerting measures for the stoppage or destruction of the obnoxious machines. Of these proceedings the Messrs.

Burton were probably informed, since a number of their weavers, dressers, and overlookers had been for some time drilled to the use of firearms within the mill. A piece or two of small ordnance were also placed within the yard, opposite the main entrance, and such other precautions had been taken as were deemed necessary for the defence of the place. These measures were superintended by Mr. Emanuel Burton, who was greatly respected by the workmen, and had inspired them with a portion of his own spirit of resistance.

On the report reaching the factory that the mob was coming, the works were stopped, and all the hands, save those detained for the defence of the mill, were sent home. The mob, after a short delay in the market place, proceeded to the bottom of Wood Street, where the factory was situated, and halted in front of the building, and a score or two of boys who led the mob set up a shout, and began to throw stones and break the windows. A number of discharges from the mill followed, but as no one seemed to have been hurt another shout was set up, and the cry went round, "Oh! they're nobbu feyerin peawther; they darno shoot bullets," and the stone throwing was recommenced. Other discharges from the mill now took place, and some of the mob who had experience in such matters remarked that the crack was different, and that ball was being fired. A moment only confirmed this opinion, for several were wounded, and three fell dead, on seeing which the mob fled in all directions. In a short time a troop of the Scots Greys were in the town, and they were quickly followed by a company of the Cumberland militia. The streets and lanes were then cleared, after which the horsemen returned to Manchester, and the militia took up their quarters in the mill.

The number of the wounded on this unfortunate occasion was never truly known, but it was soon ascertained that four persons, all young men, had been killed. Joseph Jackson, sixteen years of age, and David Knott, aged twenty, both from Oldham, were killed at the end of Chapel Street; John Siddall, of Radcliffe Bridge, aged twenty-two, was killed lower down the street; and George Albison, a young man from Rhodes, was wounded whilst going along the highway, and shortly



after bled to death, there being no surgical aid promptly at hand.

On my arrival the streets were all quiet, the doors closed, and the alehouses silent. People's minds were, however, sadly agitated, and fierce denunciations were uttered against "Burton and his shooters," whilst very little anger was expressed against the men who had plundered shops. In the coat pocket of one of the killed was found a half-pound of currants, the fruit, no doubt, of such plunder.

I state these things because they are facts, and not from any feeling which I now have, one way or the other, except for truth; though at the time I entertained perhaps as strong a dislike towards the "shooters" and their employers as did any man in the town.

My dear wife and child I found safe at home, but greatly was I alarmed, and exceedingly thankful, when I learned that my wife, in her curiosity to watch a mob, had gone down the town, and, with another thoughtless woman or two, had stood at the window of a cottage nearly opposite to the factory, within range of the shot, and only a few yards from the spot where one man was killed. I gave her a lecture for so doing, the first perhaps since our marriage, and being convinced of her folly, she promised never to transgress in that way again, and I daresay she never has.

The morning following this eventful day I went to my work at Manchester, as usual, and in the afternoon we were again startled by the intelligence that a mob larger than that of the day before had visited Middleton, and had burned the dwelling of Mr. Emanuel Burton and those of several of his workmen to the ground. On my way to Middleton that evening I met individuals on the road who were returning to Manchester with fragments of picture frames and mahogany goods in their hands. The mob had indeed been desperately bent on destruction that day, but, more wary than on the day preceding, they had divided their forces, and whilst one strong party threatened the factory, and by that means detained the militia at that post, others went to the houses of certain of the workmen who had defended the factory the day before, and not finding them



at home, had piled their furniture in the street, and had destroyed it by fire. In this manner the furniture of one cottage at Back-o'th'-brow, and that of two others at the Club houses was destroyed. The mob, it should be understood, was on this day armed with guns, scythes, old swords, bludgeons, and pitchforks. A party of colliers from the neighbourhoods of Oldham and Hollinwood carried mattocks, and with these tools were in the act of knocking the end of a house down, when they were called off to another place. For whilst these outrages were in progress at Back-o'th'-brow and Club houses, another party of rioters set off towards Rhodes, and it was to aid these latter that the colliers were called away. The house of Mr. Emanuel Burton, at Parkfield, was the first object which attracted their vengeance. It had been abandoned by the family, and the mob immediately ransacked the cellars and larder, the younger ones crunching lumps of loaf sugar or licking out preserve jars, whilst the older hands tapped the beer barrels and the spirit bottles, or devoured the choice but substantial morsels of the pantry or store-room. This part of the business having been accomplished, the work of destruction commenced, and nearly every article of furniture was irretrievably broken. Amongst the rioters were two sisters, who might have been taken for young Amazons, so active were they in the pillage, and so influential in directing others. To some of those around them they were, however, known only as "Clem" and "Nan," the two tall, dark-haired, and handsomely formed daughters of a venerable old weaver, who lived on one of the borders of the township. These two were in a room, the windows of which were hung with light muslin curtains, and a sofa, with a cover of light cotton, was also in the same room. Nothing further in the way of breakage remaining to be done, and these two being the only ones in this room, "Come," said one to the other, "let's put a finish to this job," and taking up a shred which lay on the floor, she lighted it at the fire which had been left burning in the grate. In a moment the sofa was on fire; the sofa set the curtains in a blaze, and sofa and curtains communicated the flames to the floor and window, and at the expiration of probably half an hour not a beam nor a board remained unconsumed in the whole building.

The next place intended for destruction was the mansion and farmstead of Mr. Burton, senr., at Rhodes, and only a very short distance from the scene which has just been described. A part of the mob was already hovering about the grounds, and some individuals had advanced into the yard and begun operations, when a tumult and a clatter of hoofs caused them to look around, and they beheld the Scots Greys close upon them. Their flight and dispersion were the work of an instant, and this valuable property was saved.

Whilst the Greys were dispersing the mob at Park House and Rhodes, others of the same regiment, assisted by the Militia, were clearing the rioters out of Middleton, which they did speedily and effectively. In the performance of these services, however, greater severity was exercised than had been the wont of these two corps on former occasions. A man named John Nield, from Oldham, was shot through the body by one of the Greys whilst attempting to escape near Alkington Hall; another man was shot by one of the Greys, and left for dead, near Tonge Lane; a woman, also, who was looking through her own window, was fired at by another of the same party, and a bullet went through her arm. But a serjeant of the Militia earned deathless execration by shooting an old man, named Johnson, from Oldham. Johnson had never been nearer to the mob or the factory than the Church publichouse, where he had sat in the kitchen with the family, and had smoked his pipe and drunk a glass or two of ale. Towards evening, when it was supposed that all the disturbance was over, he strolled into the churchyard, and was standing with his hands in his coat pockets, reading the inscription on a grave-stone at the steeple end, when a serjeant and private of the Militia, having ascended the Warren, caught sight of him from amongst the trees; the serjeant went down on one knee, levelled, fired, and killed the old man dead, the ball passing through his neck.

A number of shots were fired at the soldiers during the pursuit, but none of them, I believe, were wounded, except from casualties with their horses. A number of persons were made prisoners during the riot, and subsequently many left

the country for a time. The two Amazonian damsels escaped seizure, and few only of the real leaders were ever prosecuted ; whilst several who had as little to do with the outrage as I had myself were, on the information of a bad, half-crazed, but artful doxey, named Kent, lodged in jail, tried, found guilty, and sentenced to long imprisonments.

And now, friend reader, I have to return to my own affairs, and to relate an incident, which, next to my grandfather's rejection of Madam Ann Bamford's overtures, and my father's refusal to let me learn Latin, had probably a greater influence in determining my subsequent condition than had any other event of my life. I allude to the circumstance of my leaving the employ of my old masters, in Peel Street, and to my preference of a country residence with domestic employment, which consigned me at once to a life of independence, with alternate ease, exigency, and poverty.

Our young gentleman, Mr. M. the salesman, having been recently married, and become a housekeeper, it happened that he wanted a load of coals, and as I was always glad to render him a service, I undertook to get him a load of real Oldham Black Mine. We had been very slack at the works of late, and the cart had often returned almost without any load, and as no intimation had been given me of a change in that respect, I went out after breakfast, although it was a market day, and bought the coals for Mr. M., and saw them delivered and paid for. On my return to the warehouse, the cart had, to my surprise, been waiting to be loaded with grey goods. On my meeting Mr. Hole in the passage, he looked displeased, and asked where I had been ? I told him, and he said I was neglectful ; that I ought not to have gone off when I knew the cart would have to be loaded, and if I could not attend to their business better I had best look out for another situation. I merely replied that I had not been wilfully neglectful, for that I did not expect the cart would have to be loaded that day ; and so I went to work, and had the cart loaded and off in quick time. Those expressions of my employer sunk deep into my mind : they sorely wounded my feelings. I pondered them over and over, trying to discover some ameliorative



meaning in them, but as I could not disguise or qualify their intention, I told Mr. M. at the week's end that I understood Mr. Hole's words as a notice to leave, and that I should accordingly do so at the expiration of a month.

I am not assured that Mr. M. said anything in my favour to my employer respecting this business, though I daresay he would not omit so fair a course. Nothing, however, was said to me, until the month was out, when Mr. M. said they were not yet suited with a man, and it would put them to great inconvenience if I left at that time. I accordingly stopped another fortnight, and as they were not yet prepared, I stopped another week and then left the situation.

As trade was now going well, work for the loom was readily obtainable, and good wages were given. After, therefore, I had made up my mind to leave, I turned my attention to employment of this sort, purchased looms, bespoke work for myself and wife, who had become tolerably handy at the business, so that when I left Messrs. Hole and Co. I was in a degree pledged to become a weaver.

I should, however, mention that, pursuant to my habit of versifying on nearly every occasion in which my feelings were interested, I had composed a couple of stanzas on this momentous event, which stanzas, on the day of my departure, I wrote on the slate on my desk, and left them there. They were as follows :

“ To-morrow's sun beholds me free,  
Come night, and I no more will own  
A master's high authority,  
Nor bend beneath his angry frown ;  
But to my native woods and plains  
I'll haste, and join the rustic swains.  
  
Gay printed 'fancies,' 'plates,' nor 'chintz,'  
No more with wonder shall I view,  
Nor criticise the various tints  
Of pink or azure, green or blue,  
Save when I pluck the flow'ret sweet  
That clasps my lonely wandering feet.”

A farewell, I may surely be allowed to say, quite poetical, and sentimental enough for a hard-fisted warehouse porter.



Well ! on the Tuesday after I had left, I went to Manchester about the work I was to have, and as one warehouse which I had to call at was in Watling Street, and another was in Marsden's Square, I must go past my old warehouse or take a circuit, and I chose the direct road. When I got into Peel Street, old Bob, the carter, who was never very active, was sadly hobbled in the loading of carboys and other unhandy articles, and as I stopped to inquire how he was, he asked me to lend him a hand, and I did so. My place had not yet become occupied by another, and Mr. M. seeing me helping about the door, called me in, and asked me where the scissors were with which we used to cut patterns ? So I found them, and he desired me to take them to Mr. Hole, who was upstairs in the sale room, and that I did also. Mr. Hole, on seeing me, was quite free, and asked very kindly how I was, to which I replied in that tone of becoming respect which I never could suppress when treated with proper regard. He sent me upstairs into the smaller print room for some pattern shreds, and taking a passing glance at my little recess and the desk, I noticed that the slate was removed, an intimation to me that the place had been overhauled, and my verses probably discovered. I was therefore the less surprised when on my return to the sale room Mr. Hole asked me whether or not I had got another situation ? I said I had not got another. He asked whether I had any expectations of one, and I replied that I had not yet made any application. Because, he said, " You are qualified for a more respectable situation than the one you have had with us, and if you think proper to look out, and apply for one such as I have alluded to, I will give you a recommendation, with which you will not need to be ashamed in asking for one highly respectable ; and as you are at present disengaged, if you choose to come back and stop with us until something more befitting you offers, you will find everything agreeable as heretofore." I thanked him in terms of fervent and sincere gratitude ; stated to him what were my views relative to present employment, and said that should I have occasion to change my plans, and to revert to the prospects which he had opened before me, I would, with

every sentiment of grateful respect, hasten to avail myself of his kind assistance.

He said he was afraid I was acting on a mistaken view of what was most conducive to my welfare, and he should be glad if I did not regret it hereafter.

I said I hoped I should not, and that at any rate, for the present I should be happy with my family.

And so, with mutual kind wishes, we parted.

And here, for the present at least, must the reader and I part also. A narrative of the course of my life from 1813 to 1816 may perhaps engage my pen on some future day. Meantime, the reader may be given to understand, that having, on my leaving Manchester, secured plenty of material for the loom, my wife and myself working in one place, she soon became an expert weaver, and we were as happy, probably, as two human beings of our condition could be; our little girl, the light of our eyes, and the joy of our hearts, playing beside us. Afterwards we went to reside with my wife's uncle and aunt, she assisting the old people in the house and shop, and I, on the recommendation of Mr. Hole, taking the situation of putter-out to weavers at Middleton, for Messrs. Dickinson and Wilde. Afterwards they offered me an engagement at their warehouse in Manchester, which I declined. Subsequently, for a short time I was engaged in the bookselling or publication business; and, in 1816, was a member of a Committee of Parliamentary Reformers, and secretary to the Hampden Club, at Middleton. Should the reader, during any leisure moment, wish to hear my narrative resumed, he may consult my book entitled "*Passages in the Life of a Radical*," and if that does not suffice, but he wishes for further acquaintance, he may peruse my "*Walks in South Lancashire*," which I purpose shortly to resume. Those walks may perhaps lead us to "*The End*," after which some abler hand will probably take up the task of marker for history, which I have so imperfectly performed.



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*PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF A RADICAL*



# PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF A RADICAL.

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## CHAPTER I.

RIOTS OF 1815 AND 1816—WILLIAM COBBETT—HAMPDEN CLUBS—  
DELEGATE MEETINGS—LEADERS OF REFORM—THE FIRST  
TRAITOR.

IT is matter of history that whilst the laurels were yet cool on the brows of our victorious soldiers on their second occupation of Paris, the elements of convulsion were at work amongst the masses of our labouring population ; and that a series of disturbances commenced with the introduction of the Corn Bill in 1815, and continued, with short intervals, until the close of the year 1816. In London and Westminster riots ensued, and were continued for several days whilst the bill was discussed ; at Bridport, there were riots on account of the high price of bread ; at Bideford there were similar disturbances to prevent the exportation of grain ; at Bury, by the unemployed, to destroy machinery ; at Ely, not suppressed without bloodshed ; at Newcastle-on-Tyne, by colliers and others ; at Glasgow, where blood was shed ; at Preston, by unemployed weavers ; at Nottingham, by Luddites, who destroyed thirty frames ; at Merthyr Tydvil, on a reduction of wages ; at Birmingham, by the unemployed ; and at Dundee, where, owing to the high price of meal, upwards of one hundred shops were plundered. At this time the writings of William Cobbett suddenly became of great authority ; they



were read on nearly every cottage hearth in the manufacturing districts of South Lancashire, in those of Leicester, Derby, and Nottingham ; also in many of the Scottish manufacturing towns. Their influence was speedily visible. He directed his readers to the true cause of their sufferings—misgovernment; and to its proper corrective—parliamentary reform. Riots soon become scarce, and from that time they have never obtained their ancient vogue with the labourers of this country.

Let us not descend to be unjust. Let us not withhold the homage which, with all the faults of William Cobbett, is still due to his great name. Instead of riots and destruction of property, Hampden clubs were now established in many of our large towns, and the villages and districts around them. Cobbett's books were printed in a cheap form ; the labourers read them, and thenceforward became deliberate and systematic in their proceedings. Nor were there wanting men of their own class, to encourage and direct the new converts. The Sunday Schools of the preceding thirty years had produced many working men of sufficient talent to become readers, writers, and speakers in the village meetings for parliamentary reform. Some also were found to possess a rude poetic talent, which rendered their effusions popular, and bestowed an additional charm on their assemblages ; and by such various means, anxious listeners at first, and then zealous proselytes, were drawn from the cottages of quiet nooks and dingles, to the weekly readings and discussions of the Hampden clubs.

One of these clubs was established in 1816, at the small town of Middleton, near Manchester ; and I, having been instrumental in its formation, a tolerable reader also, and a rather expert writer, was chosen secretary. The club prospered, the number of men increased, the funds raised by contributions of a penny a week became more than sufficient for all out-goings, and, taking a bold step, we soon rented a chapel which had been given up by a society of Kilhamite Methodists. This place we threw open for the religious worship of all sects and parties, and there we held our meetings on the evenings of Monday and Saturday in each week. The

proceedings of our society ; its place of meeting—singular as being the first place of worship occupied by reformers (for so in those days we were termed), together with the services of religion connected with us—drew a considerable share of public attention to our transactions, and obtained for the leaders some notoriety. They, like the young aspirants of the present, and all the other days, whose heads are as warm as their hearts, could sing with old John Bunyan—

“ Then fancies fly away,  
We fear not what men say.”

Several meetings of delegates from the surrounding districts were held at our chapel, on which occasions the leading reformers of Lancashire were generally seen together. One of our delegate meetings deserves particular notice. It was held on Sunday, the 16th December, 1816, when it was determined to send out missionaries to other towns and villages, particularly to Yorkshire. The experiment was considered somewhat hazardous, for at that time the great towns of Yorkshire, Halifax, Bradford, and Leeds, to which they were bound, had shown but small sympathy with the cause of reform. They went, however, and, I believe, made an impression which awakened the cause in that county. At this meeting a man of the name of William Wilson appeared as the delegate from Moston ; he was known to several present, and, being considered a good reformer, was chosen secretary for the occasion. He thus took copies of all the resolutions and proceedings. Soon afterwards it was discovered that he was in communication with the police of Manchester. He then left the district, abandoning his wife and a young family of children, and was next heard of as a police officer in London, to which place his wife and children followed him. Can this have been our first traitor ?

On the 1st of January, 1817, a meeting of delegates from twenty-one petitioning bodies was held in our chapel, when resolutions were passed declaratory of the right of every male to vote, who paid taxes ; that males of eighteen should be eligible to vote ; that parliaments should be elected annually ;

that no placeman or pensioner should sit in parliament ; that every twenty thousand inhabitants should send a member to the House of Commons ; and that talent and virtue were the only qualifications necessary. Such were the moderate views and wishes of the reformers in those days, as compared with the present. The ballot was not insisted upon as a part of reform.\* Concentrating our whole energy for the obtainment of annual parliaments and universal suffrage, we neither interfered with the House of Lords, nor the bench of bishops, nor the working of factories, nor the corn laws, nor the payment of members, nor tithes, nor church rates, nor a score of other matters which in these days have been pressed forward with the effect of distracting the attention and weakening the exertions of reformers ; any one or all of which matters would be far more likely to succeed with a House of Commons elected on the suffrage we claimed than with one returned as at present.† Quoting scripture, we did, in fact say, first obtain annual parliaments, and universal suffrage, and, “all these things shall be added unto you.”

Some of the nostrum-mongers of the present day would have been made short work of by the reformers of that time ; they would not have been tolerated for more than one speech, but handed over to the civil power. It was not until we became infested by spies, incendiaries, and their dupes—distracting, misleading, and betraying—that physical force was mentioned amongst us. After that our moral power waned, and what we gained by the accession of demagogues, we lost by their criminal violence, and the estrangement of real friends.

\* 1842. It is interesting to compare with these demands the “six points” of the “Charter”—universal suffrage, vote by ballot, equal electoral districts, annual parliaments, abolition of property qualification of members, and the payment of members.

† Under the Reform Act of 1832.

## CHAPTER II.

### AUTHOR'S VIEWS ON EDUCATION AND ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS.

IT may not be amiss to state that the opinions contained in this work, whether of persons or transactions, are those of the writer at the period they refer to. Time, the ameliorator of all things, has not passed him without leaving some experience; and the lessons of that severe handmaid, making him better acquainted with mankind and himself, have somewhat matured his judgment and increased his charity; changing also, he hopes for the better, some of his views both of men and things. Hence, though elsewhere he will speak of the conduct of Henry, now Lord Brougham, strongly, as he felt at the time; he would, in his present frame of mind, make large allowances. Our educators are, after all, the best reformers, and are doing the best for their country, whether they intend so or not. In this respect, Lord Brougham is the greatest man we have. He led popular education from the dark and narrow crib where he found it, like a young colt, saddled and cruelly bitted by ignorance, for superstition to ride. He cut the straps from its sides and the bridle from its jaws, and sent it forth strong, beautiful, and free.\*

Still, we want something more than mere intellectuality;

\* Mr. Spencer Walpole observes that Brougham was "the first politician who made the subject [of popular education] his own." The earliest education returns (1818) were due to him. His Bill for the Establishment of an Education Board in London (1837) led to the formation of the Committee of the Privy Council two years later. He was the chairman of the Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge, the offspring of an enthusiasm now perhaps somewhat disparaged, but at that time a very quickening force.



that is already vigorous in produce, whilst souls lie comparatively waste. The Persians of old first taught their children to speak the truth, and that was a wise beginning; but, like the embalming of the Egyptians, lost to the present day. The young mothers of England, and the anxious fathers, should do more—they should give life to the souls of their offspring, and encourage and strengthen as well as comfort their young hearts. Their constant lesson should be, “With thy whole soul, love and support whatsoever is right. With thy whole soul, hate and oppose whatsoever is wrong. Fear not anything, save the contamination of sin.” The schoolmaster might then finish the intellect; and the spirit of Him who said, “Father, forgive them,” should be invoked to shed its dove-like mercy over all. Education so grounded and built upon, would bring us hearts, and brave ones too, brimful of nobleness and truth, and heads to work anything requisite for their country. Intellect neglected may be repaired; but a soul once in ruin, nothing human can restore.

Nor would the writer at the present day be found praying for annual parliaments, though he would endeavour to attain the same end by better means. Annual general elections would, he is convinced, be a great political evil to the country; and reviewing all that he has seen of elections, he does say, they are generally conducted in a manner which is disgraceful to civilised society. The infamy they generate is equalled by the bungling knavery of their management. He needs not go into their history, but he would ask a rational man to note the proceedings of one of these “good old English” events; and then say whether it were not more like “hell broke loose” than anything human. Who could wish for annual recurrence of these things throughout the nation? Frequent enough their visitation when they can no longer be avoided. General elections annually would be annual curses; and single borough or county elections are best let alone until there be good cause. As, in his petition to the House of Commons, in 1837, the writer would pray that we might have the benefit without the disturbing force. He would say, let the House of Commons be, like that of the Lords, indissoluble; members to render an

account of their conduct annually ; individual members liable to be displaced by their constituents at any time, and elected, displaced, or retained, as private servants are, viz., as they do well their duty, or otherwise. The sense of the electors to be taken annually—by ballot in districts ; all elections to be by ballot. No hustings, no nomination farce, no mob gatherings, no ruffianism, no demagogueism, no canting and deception of the multitudes, nor opportunity for the display of insolence and ignorance to win a passing clap or huzza. Many evils would be done away with, excitement would be moderated, sober-mindedness would take the place of extravagance, Court intrigue or ascendancy of faction would not have the power of dispersing the people's servants, nor of throwing the country into a ferment of brute passion, to take advantage of it. Such a plan would the writer substitute for that of annual parliaments, and so far his opinions have changed on that point.

### CHAPTER III.

MEETINGS AT THE CROWN AND ANCHOR TAVERN, LONDON—  
HENRY HUNT—THOMAS CLEARY—WILLIAM COBBETT—MAJOR  
CARTWRIGHT—LORD COCHRANE.

THE Hampden Club of London, of which Sir Francis Burdett was the chairman, having issued circulars for a meeting of delegates at the "Crown and Anchor," for the purpose of discussing a Bill to be presented to the House of Commons, embracing the reform we sought, I was chosen to represent the Middleton Club on that occasion. I shall not notice the abuse which this small honour brought upon my shoulders, further than to say, that it gave me an unexpected insight into the weakness of some whom I had considered as the best of friends to myself and the cause. I thus early got a dose of disgust which would have banished me from amongst them, had I not considered that by retiring I should abandon my duty and gratify my new enemies. I therefore took up my cross, forgave them, and attended my appointment in London.

I had scarcely alighted from the coach at the "Elephant and Castle," ere I was accosted by Benbow,\* who took me to his own lodgings near Buckingham Gate, where I became comfortably settled for the present. He had been in London some time, agitating the labouring classes at their trades meetings and club-houses. That night he conducted me to the Crown and Anchor Tavern; and whilst I stood gazing around a large hall, which seemed wonderfully grand and silent for a tavern, a gentleman came out of a room and

\* William Benbow, shoemaker, of Birch, near Middleton.

accosted my companion, who increased my curiosity and awe by pronouncing the name of Mr. Hunt.\* He invited us within; and we there found a small party of delegates, recently arrived, in friendly conversation with Mr. Cleary, the secretary of the London Club. This was an event in my life. Of Mr. Hunt I had imbibed a high opinion, and his first appearance did not diminish my expectations. He was gentlemanly in his manner and attire, six feet and better in height, and extremely well formed. He was dressed in a blue lapelled coat, light waistcoat and kerseys, and topped boots; his leg and foot were about the firmest and neatest I ever saw. He wore his own hair; it was in moderate quantity and a little grey. His features were regular, and there was a kind of youthful blandness about them which, in amicable discussion, gave his face a most agreeable expression. His lips were delicately thin and receding; but there was a dumb utterance about them which in all the portraits I have seen of him was never truly copied. His eyes were blue or light grey—not very clear nor quick, but rather heavy; except as I afterwards had opportunities for observing, when he was excited in speaking; at which times they seemed to distend and protrude; and if he worked himself furious, as he sometimes would, they became blood-streaked, and almost started from their sockets. Then it was that the expression of his lip was to be observed—the kind smile was exchanged for the curl of scorn, or the curse of indignation. His voice was bellowing; his face swollen and flushed; his griped hand beat as if it were to pulverise; and his whole manner gave token of a painful energy, struggling for utterance.

Such was the appearance of Mr. Hunt as I saw him that night, and on subsequent occasions. His every-day manners, exhibiting the quality and operations of his mind, will, of necessity, occupy some portion of the future pages of this work. He was constantly, perhaps through good but misapplied intentions, placing himself in most arduous situations. No repose, no tranquillity for him. He was always beating against a tempest of his own or of others' creating. He

\* Henry Hunt, known as "Orator Hunt." He died in 1835.



had thus more to sustain than any other man of this day and station, and should be judged accordingly.

Thomas Cleary, the secretary of the Hampden Club, was also in the room; he was perhaps twenty-five or twenty-six years of age, about middle stature, slightly formed, and had a warmth and alacrity in his manner which created at once respect and confidence. He was, and I have no doubt is yet, if he be living, worthy of and enjoying the esteem of all who know him. Hunt ferociously traduced his character at a subsequent election for Westminster, but the shame recoiled on the calumniator. Afterwards he attempted to fix upon Cleary the stigma of being a Government spy, and intimated that he tried about this time to involve some of the delegates in illegal transactions—a charge as absurd as it was false.

The day of meeting arrived; Sir Francis Burdett was in the country, and the worthy old Major Cartwright\* took the chair. With a picture of that venerable patriot in my recollection, let me pause, and render the tribute due to integrity and benevolence. He was far in years—I should suppose about seventy; rather above the common stature, straight for his age; thin, pale, and with an expression of countenance in which firmness and benignity were most predominant. I see him, as it were, in his long brown surtout and plain brown wig, walking up the room, and seating himself placidly in the head seat. A mild smile played on his features, as a simultaneous cheer burst from the meeting. Cobbett stood near his right hand. I had not seen him before. Had I met him anywhere save in that room and on that occasion, I should have taken him for a gentleman farming his own broad estate. He seemed to have that kind of self-possession and ease about him, together with a certain bantering jollity, which are so natural to fast-handed and well-housed lords of the soil. He was, I should suppose, not less than six feet in height; portly, with a fresh, clear, and round cheek, and a small grey eye, twinkling with good-humoured archness. He was dressed in a blue coat, yellow swansdown waistcoat, drab kersey small-

\* Thomas Cartwright, a major in the militia, a Reformer from 1780—hence styled the “Father of Reform.”

clothes, and top boots. His hair was grey, and his cravat and linen were fine, and very white. In short, he was the perfect representation of what he always wished to be—an English gentleman-farmer.

The proceedings of the meeting it is not requisite that I should go into; they have long been matters of record. The absence of the baronet was the subject of much observation by the delegates; and yet, in deference to his wishes, as was understood, a resolution was introduced and supported by Cobbett, limiting the suffrage to householders. This was opposed by many, and especially by the delegates from the manufacturing district; some of whom were surprised that so important a concession should be made to the opinion of any individual. Hunt treated the idea with little respect, and I thought he felt no discomfort at obtaining a sarcastic fling or two at the baronet. Cobbett advocated the restricted measure, scarcely in earnest, and weakly, and alleging the impracticability of universal suffrage. The discussion proceeded for some time and no one grappled the objection; until, fearing the resolution would be adopted, I in a few words explained how universal suffrage might be carried into effect, by taking the voters from the Militia list, or others made on the same plan. Hunt took up the idea, in a way which I thought rather annoyed Cobbett, who at length arose, and expressed his conviction of its practicability, giving me all the merit of his conversion. Resolutions in favour of universal suffrage and annual parliaments were thereupon carried, and soon afterwards the meeting was adjourned to the day following. Several of our country delegates were now presented to Cobbett by Benbow, who appeared to act almost as master of the ceremonies. I was not however introduced to the great man, and soon after he left the room.

On the day when Parliament was opened, a number of the delegates met Hunt at the Golden Cross, Charing Cross, and from thence went with him in procession to the residence of Lord Cochrane,\* in Palace Yard, where a large petition from Bristol, and most of those from the north of England,

\* Afterwards Lord Dundonald.

were placed in his lordship's hands. There had been some tumult in the morning; the Prince Regent had been insulted on his way to the house, and this part of the town was still in a degree of excitement. We were crowded around, and accompanied by a great multitude, which at intervals rent the air with shouts. Now it was that I beheld Hunt in his element. He unrolled the petition, which was many yards in length, and it was carried on the heads of the crowd perfectly unharmed. He seemed to know almost every man of them, and his confidence in, and entire mastery over them, made him quite at ease. A louder huzza than common was music to him; and when the questions were asked eagerly, "Who is he?" "What are they about?" and the reply was, "Hunt! Hunt! huzza!" his gratification was expressed by a stern smile. He might be likened to the genius of commotion, calling forth its elements, and controlling them at will. On arriving at Palace Yard, we were shown into a room below stairs, and whilst Lord Cochrane and Hunt conversed above, a slight and elegant young lady, dressed in white, and very interesting, served us with wine. She is, if I am not misinformed, now Lady Dundonald. At length his lordship came to us. He was a tall young man; cordial and unaffected in his manner. He stooped a little, and had somewhat of a sailor's gait in walking; his face was rather oval; fair naturally, but now tanned and sun-freckled. His hair was sandy, his whiskers rather small, and of a deeper colour; and the expression of his countenance was calm and self-possessed. He took charge of our petitions, and being seated in an armchair, we lifted him up and bore him on our shoulders across Palace Yard, to the door of Westminster Hall, the old rafters of which rung with the shouts of the vast multitude outside.

## CHAPTER IV.

SIR FRANCIS BURDETT—VISIT TO KNIGHTSBRIDGE BARRACKS—  
TRADE CLUBS OF LONDON—PRESTON AND WATSON—SCENE  
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—HENRY BROUGHAM.

ABOUT this time I was formally introduced to Mr. Cobbett, by Benbow. He received me in a manner which was highly gratifying to my feelings. This was at his office, or rooms, in Newcastle Street, Strand. A number of other delegates were present, but I thought Cobbett gave the preference above all, to our friend Fitton of Royton; whose sarcastic vein had particularly pleased him. Fitton had, in a speech at a public meeting, designated a certain class in Manchester, "The Pig-tail Gentry;" a ludicrous idea certainly, and one which made Cobbett laugh till his sides shook. No man could enjoy a bit of sarcasm better than he.

A number of us went one morning to visit Sir Francis Burdett at his house in Park Place. The outside was but of ordinary appearance; and the inside was not much better, so far as we were admitted. To me it seemed like a cold, gloomy, barely furnished house; which I accounted for by supposing that it was perhaps the style of all great mansions. We were shown into a large room, the only remarkable thing in which was a bust of John Horne Tooke. Sir Francis came to us in a loose grey vest coat, which reached far towards his ankles. He had not a cravat on his neck; his feet were in slippers; and a pair of white cotton stockings hung in wrinkles on his long spare legs, which he kept alternately throwing across his knees, and rubbing down with his hands, as if he suffered, or recently had, some pain in those limbs.



He was a fine-looking man on the whole, of lofty stature, with a proud but not forbidding carriage of the head. His manner was dignified and civilly familiar; submitting to rather than seeking conversation with men of our class. He, however, discussed with us some points of the intended Bill for Reform candidly and freely, and concluded with promising to support universal suffrage, though he was not sanguine of much co-operation in the house. Under these circumstances we left Sir Francis; approving much that we found in and about him, and excusing much of what we could not approve. He was one of our idols, and we were loath to give him up.

Still I could not help my thoughts from reverting to the simple and homely welcome we received at Lord Cochrane's and contrasting it with the kind of dreary stateliness of this great mansion and its rich owner. At the former place we had a brief refection, bestowed with a grace which captivated our respect, and no health was ever drunk with more sincere goodwill than was Lord Cochrane's; the little dark-haired and bright-eyed lady seemed to know it, and to be delighted that it was so. But here scarcely a servant appeared, and nothing in the shape of refreshment was seen.

On the afternoon of a Sunday, Mitchell went with me to endeavour to find a former playfellow of mine, who was now a soldier in the Foot Guards. He had fought the campaigns of Portugal, Spain, and France; and we now found him a colour-serjeant at Knightsbridge barracks. The brave fellow received us with every demonstration of friendship. I told him what business had brought us to London, and that my fellow visitor was here on the same errand. Our business made no difference with him; he brought forth his ration, and we took a hearty lunch, after which we went with him to the non-commissioned officers' room at the canteen. About half-a-dozen serjeants were there, to whom my friend introduced us, making known, without the least reserve, or show of it, the business we were come upon to the metropolis. That seemed not to weigh with them, and we were soon in a free conversation on the subject of parliamentary reform. When objections were stated, they listened candidly to our replies,

and a good-humoured discussion, half serious, half joking, was promoted on both sides. I and Mitchell had with us, and it was entirely accidental, a few of *Cobbett's Registers*, and Hone's political pamphlets, to which we sometimes appealed, and read extracts from. The soldiers were delighted; they burst into fits of laughter; and on the copies we had being given them, one of them read the Political Litany through, to the further great amusement of himself and the company. Thus we passed a most agreeable evening, and parted only at the last hour. Mitchell and I returned to the city; neither of us, I firmly believe, having any further thought of the circumstance than to regret that evenings so rationally and so peaceably spent came so seldom.

Very soon after this a law was passed, making it death to attempt to seduce a soldier from his duty. Could it possibly be that the occurrences of this evening led to the enactment of that law?

Several times I attended meetings of trades' clubs, and other public assemblages of the working men. They would generally be found in a large room, an elevated seat being placed for the chairman. On first opening the door, the place seemed dimmed by a suffocating vapour of tobacco, curling from the cups of long pipes, and issuing from the mouths of the smokers, in clouds of abominable odour, like nothing in the world more than one of the unclean fogs of their streets, though the latter were certainly less offensive and probably less hurtful. Every man would have his half-pint of porter before him; many would be speaking at once, and the hum and confusion would be such as gave an idea of there being more talkers than thinkers, more speakers than listeners. Presently, "order" would be called, and comparative silence would ensue; a speaker, stranger or citizen, would be announced with much courtesy and compliment. "Hear, hear, hear," would follow, with clapping of hands and knocking of knuckles on the tables till the half-pints danced; then a speech, with compliments to some brother orator or popular statesman; next a resolution in favour of parliamentary reform, and a speech to second it; an amendment on some

minor point would follow ; a seconding of that ; a breach of order by some individual of warm temperament ; half a dozen would rise to set him right, a dozen to put them down, and the vociferation and gesticulation would become loud and confounding. The door opens, and two persons of middle stature enter ; the uproar is changed to applause, and a round of huzzas welcome the new-comers. A stranger like myself inquiring—Who is he, the foremost and better dressed one?—would be answered, “That gentleman is Mr. Watson the elder, who was lately charged with high treason, and is now under bail to answer an indictment for a misdemeanour in consequence of his connection with the late meeting at Spa Fields.” The person spoken of would be supposed to be about fifty years of age, with somewhat of a polish in his gait and manner, and a degree of respectability and neatness in his dress. He was educated for a genteel profession, that of a surgeon ; had practised it, and had in consequence moved in a sphere higher than his present one. He had probably a better heart than head ; the latter had failed to bear him up in his station, and the ardour of the former had just before hurried him into transactions, from the consequences of which he had not yet escaped. His son at this time was concealed in London, a large reward having been offered for his apprehension. The other man was Preston, a co-operator with Watson, Hooper, and others, in late riots. He was about middle age, of ordinary appearance, dressed as an operative, and walked with the help of a stick. I could not but entertain a slightful opinion of the intellect and trustworthiness of these two men, when, on a morning or two afterwards, at breakfast with me and Mitchell, they narrated with seeming pride and satisfaction their several parts during the riots. Preston had mounted a wall of the Tower, and summoned the guard to surrender. The men gazed at him—laughed ; no one fired a shot—and soon after he fell down, or was pulled off by his companions, who thought (no doubt) he had acted fool long enough.

Such were two of the most influential leaders of the London operative reformers. I repeat that I thought meanly of their



qualifications for such a post. But how blind is human perception, how slow should we be to condemn! I myself was at the same moment going hand and heart with some who were as little to be depended upon as the above, and yet I could not perceive my situation. The blind were then leading the blind.

During the debate on the report of the Green Bag\* Committee, I obtained an order for admission to the gallery of the House of Commons. I well recollect, though I cannot describe, all the conflicting emotions which arose within me as I approached that assembly, with the certainty of now seeing and hearing those whom I considered to be the authors of my country's wrongs. Curiosity certainly held its share of my feelings; but a strong dislike to the "boroughmonger crew" and their measures held a far larger share. After a tough struggle at elbowing and pushing along a passage, up a narrow staircase, and across a room, I found myself in a small gallery, from whence I looked on a dimly lighted place below. At the head of the room, or rather den, for such it appeared to me, sat a person in a full loose robe of, I think, scarlet and white. Above his head were the royal arms, richly gilded; at his feet several men in robes and wigs were writing at a large table, on which lamps were burning, which cast a softened light on a rich ornament like a ponderous sceptre of silver and gold, or what appeared to be so. Those persons I knew must be the Speaker and the clerks of the House; and that rich ornament could be nothing else than the "mace"—the same thing, or one in its place, to which Cromwell pointed and said, "Take away that bauble; for shame—give way to honest men." On each side of this pit-looking place, leaving an open space in the centre of the floor, were some three or four hundreds of the most ordinary-looking men I had ever beheld at one view. Some were striking exceptions; several young fellows in military dresses gave relief to the sombre drapery of the others. Canning, with his smooth, bare, and capacious forehead, sat there, a spirit beaming in his looks like that of the

\* The "Green Bag" contained papers on the state of the country intended to justify the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.



leopard waiting to spring upon its prey. Castlereagh, with his handsome but immovable features; Burdett, with his head carried back, and held high as in defiance; and Brougham, with his Arab soul ready to rush forth and challenge war to all comers. The question was to me solemnly interesting, whilst the spectacle wrought strangely on my feelings. Our accusers were many and powerful, with words at will, and applauding listeners. Our friends were few and far between, with no applauders save their good conscience, and the blessings of the poor. What a scene was this to be enacted by the "collective wisdom of the nation." Some of the members stood leaning against pillars, with their hats cocked awry; some were whispering by half-dozens; others were lolling upon their seats; some, with arms a-kimbo, were eye-glassing across the house; some were stiffened immovably by starch, or pride, or both; one was speaking, or appeared to be so, by the motion of his arms, which he shook in token of defiance, when his voice was drowned by a howl as wild and remorseless as that from a kennel of hounds at feeding time. Now he points, menacing, to the ministerial benches—now he appeals to some members on this side—then to the Speaker; all in vain. At times he is heard in the pauses of that wild hubbub, but again he is borne down by the yell which awakes on all sides around him. Some talked aloud; some whinnied in mock laughter, coming, like that of the damned, from bitter hearts. Some called "order, order," some "question, question;" some beat time with the heel of their boots; some snorted into their napkins; and one old gentleman in the side gallery actually coughed himself from a mock cough into a real one, and could not stop until he was almost black in the face.

And are these, thought I, the beings whose laws we must obey? This the "most illustrious assembly of freemen in the world?" Perish freedom then, and her children too. O! for the stamp of stern old Oliver on this floor; and the clank of his scabbard, and the rush of his iron-armed band, and his voice to arise above this babel howl—"Take away that bauble"—"Begone; give place to honester men."

Such was my first view of the House of Commons ; and such the impressions strongly forced on my feelings at the time. The speaker alluded to was Henry Brougham. I heard at first very little of what he said, but I understood from occasional words, and the remarks of some whom I took for reporters, that he was violently attacking the ministers and their whole home policy. That he was so doing might have been inferred from the great exertions of the ministerial party to render him inaudible, and to subdue his spirit by a bewildering and contemptuous disapprobation. But they had before them a wrong one for being silenced, either by confusion or menace. Like a brave stag, he held them at bay, and even hurled back their defiance with "retorted scorn." In some time his words became more audible ; presently there was comparative silence, and I soon understood that he had let go the ministry, and now, unaccountable as it seemed to me, had made a dead set at the reformers. Oh ! how he did scowl towards us—contemn and disparage our best actions and wound our dearest feelings ! Now stealing near our hearts with words of wonderful power, flashing with bright wit and happy thought ; anon like a reckless wizard changing pleasant sunbeams into clouds, "rough with black winds and storms," and vivid with the cruellest shafts. Then was he listened to as if not a pulse moved ; then was he applauded to the very welkin. And he stood in the pride of his power, his foes before him subdued, but spared ; his friends derided and disclaimed, and his former principles sacrificed to "low ambition," and the vanity of such a display as this.

I would have here essayed somewhat with respect to Canning, and the character and effects of his eloquence ; but little appertaining to him remained on my mind. Every feeling was absorbed by the contemplation of that man whom I now considered to be the most perfidious of his race. I turned from the spectacle with disgust, and sought my lodgings in a kind of stupor, almost believing that I had escaped from a monstrous dream.

Such was my first view of Henry Brougham ; and such the impressions I imbibed and long entertained of that extra-

ordinary man. He sinned then, and has often done so since, against the best interests of his country ; bowing to his own image, and sacrificing reason and principle to caprice or offended self-love. But has he not done much for mercy, and for the enlightenment of his kind ? See the African dancing above his chains ! Behold the mild but irresistible light which education is diffusing over the land ! These are indeed blessings beyond all price—rays of unfading glory. They are Lord Brougham's ; and will illumine his tomb when his errors and imperfections are forgotten.

## CHAPTER V.

HABEAS CORPUS ACT SUSPENDED—BLANKET MEETING AT MANCHESTER—MARCH AND DISPERSION OF THE BLANKETEERS—TREASONABLE PLOT—JOSEPH HEALEY, THE DOCTOR; HIS OBSERVATIONS AND DISCOVERIES IN THE WELKIN.

Soon afterwards I left the great Babylon, heartily tired of it, and returned to Middleton, where events rapidly pressed on my attention.

On the morning of Sunday, the 8th of March, Benbow called on me at Middleton. I had lost sight of him since my return from London; the Habeas Corpus Act was already suspended, and I supposed from some remarks of his that he had thought it best not to be so much in public at Manchester as he previously had been. He had, however, taken a great share in getting up and arranging the Blanket Meeting; and now, after commending the intended proceeding, and dwelling on the good effects it would produce, he asked me to join in the meeting and expedition, and to bring as many of my neighbours as I could. I flatly refused; and stated my reasons, which will shortly appear. He enlarged his commendations, calculating with certainty that the Blanketeers would march to London, thousands in number; and that their petitions would be graciously, if not with some awe, received by the Prince Regent in person. I maintained my opinions—he answered with reproaches; I treated the plan as a chimera, and held lightly the judgment of its proposers and concoctors. Benbow went away in a huff, and I remained with a lowered opinion of my former comrade.

On the night of Sunday, the 9th of March, I was requested



to attend a meeting in the house of one of my neighbours, where a number of friends wished to hear my opinion with reference to the Blanket Meeting. I went to them and spoke freely in condemnation of the measure. I endeavoured to show them that the authorities of Manchester were not likely to permit their leaving the town in a body, with blankets and petitions, as they proposed; that they could not subsist on the road; that the cold and wet would kill numbers of them, who were already enfeebled by hunger and other deprivations; that soldiers always marched in divisions for the easier procurement of food and lodgings; and that an irregular multitude like themselves, could not, on an emergency, be provisioned, and quartered. That they need not expect to be welcome wherever they went, especially in such of the rotten boroughs as fell in their way, against the franchise of which they were petitioning; that the inhabitants would bolt their doors against them; and that if they took possession by force there was the law to punish them. That many persons might join their ranks who were not reformers but enemies to reform, hired perhaps to bring them and their cause into disgrace; that if these persons began to plunder on the road, the punishment and disgrace would be visited on the whole body; that they would be denounced as robbers and rebels, and the military would be brought to cut them down or take them prisoners. In conclusion, I earnestly cautioned them against having anything to do with the proposed meeting, and intimated that the parties who had got it up were not to be depended upon; that their blind zeal overran every reasonable consideration; and that if they, my neighbours, took part in the meeting, they would probably repent when it was too late. Whether it was in consequence of what I said I cannot tell; but I was afterwards gratified on hearing that no person from Middleton went as a Blanketeer.

But of this meeting, which was our first great absurdity, I must write more particularly.

It was one of the bad schemes which accompanied us from London, and was the result of the intercourse of some of the deputies with the leaders of the London operatives—the

Watsons, Prestons, and Hoopers. Mitchell and Benbow had cultivated a rather close acquaintance with these men, little suspecting, I have no doubt, that their new friends had already fallen under the influence of instigators who betrayed all their transactions to the Government. But the London leaders, or at least such of them as I conversed with, were, as I have shown, men of frank character and bearing, and apparently of sincere intention; and their manner, flattering by the confidence it bestowed, naturally led to a reciprocal feeling, and to the formation of connections, the effects of which now began to appear.

Our maxim had hitherto in all our proceedings been—"Hold fast by the laws." It was the maxim of Major Cartwright, our venerable political father, and had been adhered to with a religious observance. But doctrines varying from this now began to be broached, and measures hinted, which, if not in direct contravention of the law, were but ill-disguised subterfuges for evading its intentions.

The meeting took place according to appointment; but I not being there, my brief description must be taken as the account of others. The assemblage consisted almost entirely of operatives, four or five thousand in number; and was held on that piece of ground (St. Peter's Field) which afterwards obtained so melancholy a celebrity. Many of the individuals were observed to have blankets, rugs, or large coats, rolled up and tied, knapsack like, on their backs; some carried bundles under their arms; some had papers, supposed to be petitions rolled up; and some had stout walking sticks. The magistrates came upon the field and read the Riot Act; the meeting was afterwards dispersed by the military and special constables, and twenty-nine persons were apprehended, amongst whom were two young men, named Bagguley and Drummond, who had recently come into notice as speakers, and who being in favour of extreme measures, were much listened to and applauded. But my warm friend, Benbow, took care not to make his appearance on that occasion.

On the Riot Act being read, about three hundred persons left the meeting to commence their march to London. Some

of them formed a straggling line in Mosley Street, and marched along Piccadilly, being continually joined by others, until the whole body was collected, near Ardwick Green. The appearance of these misdirected people was calculated to excite in considerate minds pity rather than resentment. Some appeared to have strength in their limbs and pleasure in their features, others already with doubt in their looks and hesitation in their steps. A few were decently clothed and well appointed for the journey; many were covered only by rags which admitted the cold wind, and were already damped by a gentle but chilling rain. Some appeared young, with health on their cheeks, every care behind and hope alone before; the thoughts of others were probably reverting to their homes on the hill-sides, or in the sombre alleys of the town, where wives and children had resigned them for a time, in hopes of their return with plenty, and never more to part. Here a youth was waving his hand to a damsel pale and tremulous with alarm; yonder an attenuated being, giving back, after kissing it, a poorly child to the arms of its mother—he hastens towards his comrades with willing but feeble steps, looking back on those, so poor, but oh! how dear—the child is hushed with a caress, the mother turning it gently to her cold and nurtureless bosom, nurtureless of everything save deep and tender love. Her looks are still directed the way he goes; he has disappeared; and whilst her tears flow the poor but cleanly mantle is drawn over the little one, and in a conflict of grief, hope, and fear, she thoughtfully wends to her obscure and cheerless abode. A body of yeomanry soon afterwards followed those simple-minded men, and took possession of the bridge at Stockport. Many then turned back to their homes; a body of them crossed the river below, and entered Cheshire; several received sabre wounds, and one man was shot dead on Lancashire hill. Of those who persisted in their march it is only necessary to say that they arrived at nine o'clock at night in the market place at Macclesfield, being about one hundred and eighty in number. Some of them lay out all night, and took the earliest dawn to find their way home. Some were well lodged and hospitably entertained by friends; some paid



for quarters, and some were quartered in prison. Few were those who marched the following morning. About a score arrived at Leek, and six only were known to pass Ashborne bridge. And so ended the Blanket Expedition! "What would you really have done," I said to one of them, "supposing you had got to London?" "Done?" he replied, in surprise at the question; "why iv wee'd nobbo gett'n to Lunnun, we shud ha' tan th' nation, an' sattl't o'th dett." Such, and about as rational, were some of the incoherent dreams which at this time began to find favour in the eyes of the gross multitude.

But another cause was assigned for the dispersion of the Blanketeers. It was said that a purse containing from thirty to fifty pounds having been made up, was given to one of the principal leaders, with instructions to proceed on the London road a day or two in advance, to procure food and lodgings for money, where they could not be had for friendship or a more urgent motive. That "the good man," by some mistake, got out of the right way, and wandering far into Yorkshire, he never found himself till the money was all spent; and the Blanketeers, thus losing their commissary and paymaster, were broken by the same means which had dispersed more numerous armies, viz., want of necessaries; and thus "the nation" was saved for that time. However true or otherwise this account may be, it is certain that the man suddenly disappeared (but others did the same) and was out of the way a month or two, after which he paid a visit to Middleton on his return, as he said, from Yorkshire to Manchester. He was always somewhat doubted afterwards; and his last appearance in this quarter was in the character of an adroit crimp to a fortune-promising attorney.

It was about this time, though I have not the exact date, that the first out-of-door meeting was held at Rochdale. Fitton, Knight, myself, and several other public characters were invited to attend, and I did so. The day was cold and very wet; the hustings were fixed on the bare moor of Cronkeyshaw. None of the speakers save myself kept their appointment; nothing in the form of resolution or petition



had been prepared, and I had to select and arrange these from an old "Statesman" newspaper which I found at the rendezvous, the "Rose," in Yorkshire Street. The town wore an appearance of alarm, and a company or two of soldiers were under arms in the main street. The meeting was, however, well attended, and the hearts of the people seemed to warm in proportion to the merciless cold of the wind and rain, which latter teemed upon us during the whole of the proceedings. On our return, the poor redcoats were still carrying arms, though, as one of the woollen weavers remarked, it would be to little purpose should they be wanted, "as the water was already running over at the muzzles of their guns; they might squirt us," he said, "but could not shoot us." On this occasion I received pay for my attendance. On our return to the "Rose," besides refreshments, the Committee presented me with four shillings, and I accepted the money because I thought I was entitled to it, having lost work to that value at home. But I never, except on this occasion, took money or any other remuneration for attending reform meetings. I considered it a mean thing, though the practice was coming much into use, and several of my friends, without any scruple, continued to do so until "their occupation" was gone. It was a bad practice, however, and gave rise to a set of orators who made a trade of speechifying, and the race has not become extinct. These persons began to seek engagements of the kind; some would even thrust themselves upon the committee for remuneration, and generally received it. He who produced the greatest excitement, the loudest cheering, and the most violent clappings, was the best orator, and was sure to be engaged and well paid, and in order to produce those manifestations, the wildest and most extravagant rhodomontade would too often suffice. Such speakers quickly got a name; the calls on them were frequent; and they left their work or their business for a more profitable and flattering employment; tramping from place to place hawking their new fangles, and guzzling, fattening, and replenishing themselves at the expense of the simple and credulous multitude. Steadiness of conduct and consistency

of principle were soon placed as it were at a distance from us. Our unity of action was relaxed ; new speakers sprung like mushrooms about our feet ; plans were broached, quite different from any that had been recognised by the Hampden Clubs ; and the people, at a loss to distinguish friends from enemies, were soon prepared for the operations of informers, who, in the natural career of their business, became also promoters of secret plots and criminal measures of various descriptions. The good and fatherly maxim of the worthy old major, "Hold fast by the laws," was by many lost sight of.

How far the moral of these facts is applicable to the present day will be judged by an observant public, and may perhaps not be deemed ill-timed by some of the more intelligent of those who have been found amongst the persons styled Chartists. If from the records of past errors good can be extracted for present emergencies, it will be well, and let us endeavour to do so. History is a faithful monitor, requiring only to be consulted in a truth-seeking spirit, when she will vouchsafe to become a friendly counsellor, saying to her inquirer, "Come blind one and see ; come lost one, and behold thy way." Nations may read their fate in the histories of nations ; and individuals may be advised by a memoir so humble as mine.

At dusk on the evening of Tuesday, the 11th of March, the day after the Blanket meeting, a man dressed much like a dyer was brought to my residence by Joseph Healey, who had found him inquiring for me in the lower part of the town. The stranger said he had something of a private and important nature to communicate, in consequence of which I and the stranger and Healey went to the sign of the "Trumpeter," where we were accommodated with a private room. The man now told us that he was deputed by some persons at Manchester to propose that in consequence of the treatment which the Blanketeers had received at the meeting and afterwards, "a Moscow of Manchester" should take place that very night. The man paused and looked at us severally. I intimated that I knew what he meant, and desired him to go on. He said it would entirely depend on the co-operation or otherwise of the

country people ; that other messengers had been sent to every reform society within twenty miles of the town ; that if the answers were favourable to the project, the light of the conflagration was to be the signal for the country people to come in—and, in such case, the Middleton people were requested to take their station on St. George's Field. He said the plan had been arranged by a meeting held at Manchester ; that the whole force would be divided into parties, one of which was to engage the attention of the military and draw them from their barracks ; another was to take possession of the barracks and secure the arms and magazine ; another was to plunder and then set fire to the houses of individuals who were marked out ; and a fourth was to storm the New Bailey and liberate the prisoners, particularly the Blanketeers confined there. I said it was a serious thing to undertake, and that an answer could not be returned from Middleton until some friends had been consulted. On my rising to go out, the man appeared alarmed, and begged I would not betray him. I assured him he had nothing to fear, and desired him to stay with Healey until my return, which would be very soon, on which he seemed reconciled to my going. I speedily went to five of my acquaintance, chiefly members of the committee, and desired them to repair immediately to Healey's house, where business of importance would be laid before them. I then brought up the stranger and the doctor, and telling the man he might confide in us, he repeated nearly word for word what he had said at the "Trumpeter." I then said I would have nothing to do with the scheme ; that it was unlawful, inhuman, and cowardly. I told him he appeared to be a simple young fellow, and was probably the dupe of some designing villain. My friends agreed with my opinion, both as to the proposal and the instrument who broached it : we bade him, however, not to mistrust us ; gave him refreshment, and sent him away, more in sorrow for his peril (being persuaded he was in the hands of villains) than of resentment for the decoy he had attempted. We bade him good night, and he went his way.

The young man said his name was Samuel Priestley ; I



observed that he had lost a finger from his left hand ; he said he lived at Bank Top, Manchester. I afterwards made inquiries respecting him on the spot, but never could hear of such a person in the place or neighbourhood. This statement, however, cannot now injure him.

After he was gone we consulted about this strange message and unknown messenger. We had not heard of the plot before, and though we doubted not that it had been sanctioned, as the man stated, by the Manchester committee, that circumstance did not increase our confidence. We had no reliance on their sagacity or their integrity as a body ; men who could get up and countenance the Blanket Expedition had no weight with us. They were moreover reported to be under the influence of spies from the police ; a suspicion which many circumstances tended to strengthen. The plot itself did the same ; the unknown messenger, the precipitation, "to be done that very night," the population for twenty miles around an immense town to be brought upon it by midnight, and then to be divided, apportioned, and set to work by men of whom they knew nothing ! The proposal was too absurd, as well as iniquitous, to excite anything save wonder and disgust, even with simple and inexperienced ones like ourselves. Besides, would Major Cartwright have sanctioned such a measure ? Certainly not. And then we almost regretted that we had suffered the emissary to depart.

It was deemed prudent that Healey and I should on that night sleep from home, and at some place where our stay could be proved, should anything arise to render such a step necessary ; and none could tell what might be necessary, as in those days of alarm and uncertainty no one knew what was impending. An old female reformer accordingly gave us her house and bed, and turning the key, locked us in, whilst we, in our simplicity, were quite satisfied with having taken so wise a precaution against any false evidence which might by possibility be brought to connect us with the plot of which we had been apprised. We retired to rest and lay talking this strange matter over until sleep overtook us. I was first to awake, and seeing a brightness behind the curtain, I stepped



to the window, and sure enough beheld in the southern sky a stream of light which I thought must be that of a distant fire. It was a fine crisped morning, and as I looked, a piece of a moon came wandering to the west from behind some masses of cloud. Now she would be entirely obscured; then streaks of her pale beams would be seen breaking on the edges of the vapours; then a broader gleam would come; then again it would be pale and receding; but the clouds were so connected that the fair traveller had seldom a space for showing her unveiled horn. I saw how it was; my conflagration had dwindled to a moonbeam, and as I stood with the frost tingling at my toes "an unlucky thought" (as we say, when excusing our own sins we impute them to a much abused sable personage) came into my head to have a small joke at the doctor's expense; and as it was a mode of amusement to which I must confess I was rather prone, I immediately began to carry it into effect. I gave a loud cough or two; the doctor thereupon grunted and turned over in bed; when, in the very break of his sleep, I said aloud, as I crept beneath the bed-clothes, "there's a fine leet i'th' welkin, as th' witch o' Brandwood sed when the devil wur ridin' o'er Rossenda." "Leet," said the doctor; "a fine leet, weer? weer?" "Why go to th' windo' an' look." That instant my sanguine friend was out of bed and at the window, his head stuck behind the curtain. "There's a great leet," he said, "to'rd Manchester." "There is indeed," I replied, "it's mitch but weary wark is gooin' on omung yon foke." "It's awful," said the doctor; "thei'r agate as sure as we're heer." "I think there's summut up," I said. I was now snugly rolled in the clothes, and perceived at the same time that the doctor was getting into a kind of dancing shiver, and my object being to keep him in his shirt till he was cooled and undeceived, and consequently a little sprung in temper, I asked, "Dun yo really think then ot th' teawn's o' foyer?" "Foyer," he replied; "there's no deawt on't." "Con yo see th' flames, doctor?" "Nowe, I conno' see th' flames, but I con see th' leet ut coms fro' em." "That's awful," I ejaculated. "Aye, it's awful," he said; "come an' see for yo'rsel'." "Nowe, I'd reythar not," I answered; "I

dunno' like sich seets; it's lucky ut we're heer—they conno' say ut we'n had owt to do wi' it, at ony rate, con they, doctor?" "Nowe," he said, "they conno'. It keeps changin'," he said. "Con yo' yer owt?" I asked. "Nowe, I conno' yer nowt," he said. I, however, heard his teeth hacking in his head, and stuffed the sheet into my mouth to prevent my laughter from being noticed. "Ar' yo' sure, doctor?" I asked. No reply. "Is it blazin' up?" I said. "Blazin' be hanged!" was the answer. "Wot dun yo' myen, doctor—is it gwon eawt then?" "Gullook!" he said, "it's nobbut th' moon, an' yo' knewn it oth' while." A loud burst of laughter followed, which I enjoyed till the bed shook; my companion muttering imprecations and sundry devil's prayers against all "moon doggs an' welkin lookers," by which terms I knew he meant myself for one.

## CHAPTER VI.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE SUSPENSION OF THE HABEAS CORPUS—  
STATE OF THE COUNTRY—STOPPAGE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS  
—SECRET ONES COMMENCED.

PERSONAL liberty not being now secure from one hour to another, many of the leading reformers were induced to quit their homes, and seek concealment where they could obtain it. Those who could muster a few pounds, or who had friends to give them a frugal welcome, or who had trades with which they could travel, disappeared like swallows at the close of summer, no one knew whither. The single men stayed away altogether; the married ones would occasionally steal back at night to their wan-cheeked families, perhaps to divide with them some trifle they had saved during their absence, perhaps to obtain a change of linen or other garment for future concealment, but most of all, as would naturally be the case, to console, and be consoled by their wives and little ones. Perhaps one had found an asylum amongst kind friends, and had brought home a little hoard, the fruits of his own industry and carefulness, or of their generosity. Perhaps he had been wandering in want, not daring to make himself known, until his beard disguised him, his shoes and stockings were trampled from his feet, and his linen was in rags; when at length, worn out and reckless, he would venture home, like the wearied bird which found no place to rest. Perhaps he had been discovered to be a reform leader, and had been threatened, mayhap pursued, and, like a hunted hare, now returned to the place of former repose. Then he would come home stealthily under cover of darkness; his wife would rush into his arms,

his little ones would be about his knees, looking silent pleasure—for they, poor things, like nestling birds, had learned to be mute in danger.

But with all precautions, it did sometimes happen that in such moments of mournful joy the father would be seized, chained, and torn from his family before he had time to bless them or to receive their blessings and tears. Such scenes were of frequent occurrence, and have thrown a melancholy retrospection over those days. Private revenge or political differences were gratified by secret and often false information handed to the police. The country was distracted by rumours of treasonable discoveries, and apprehensions of the traitors, whose fate was generally predicted to be death or perpetual imprisonment. Bagguley, Johnson, Drummond, and Benbow were already in prison at London; and it was frequently intimated to me, through some very kind relations-in-law, that I and some of my acquaintances would soon be arrested. This sort of information was always brought to Middleton by parties who, being in the manufacturing line, visited Manchester twice or thrice a week for the purpose of disposing of their goods. They appeared to be well acquainted with the movements of the police; they could tell when king's messengers arrived or departed; how many State warrants had been issued; who would be next apprehended; and such like useful and pleasant things, which they always took care to make known in such quarters as made it sure to reach those they wished to render unhappy by anticipation of troubles they could not now avoid. And, strange to say, many of their predictions were verified. King's messengers did arrive: Government warrants were issued; and the persons they mentioned were taken to prison. A cloud of gloom and mistrust hung over the whole country. The suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was a measure the result of which we young reformers could not judge, save by report, and that was of a nature to cause anxiety in the most indifferent of us. The proscriptions, imprisonments, trials, and banishments of 1792 were brought to our recollections by the similarity of our situation to those of the sufferers of that period. It seemed



as if the sun of freedom were gone down, and a rayless expanse of oppression had finally closed over us. Cobbett, in terror of imprisonment, had fled to America; Sir Francis Burdett had enough to do in keeping his own arms free; Lord Cochrane was threatened, but quailed not; Hunt was still somewhat turbulent, but he was powerless, for he had lost the genius of his influence when he lost Cobbett,\* and was now almost like Sampson, shorn and blind. The worthy old Major remained at his post, brave as a lion, serene as an unconscious child; and also, in the rush and tumult of that time, almost as little noticed. Then, of our country reformers, John Knight had disappeared; Pilkington was out of the way somewhere; Bradbury had not yet been heard of; Mitchell moved in a sphere of his own, the extent of which no man knew save himself; and Kay and Fitton were seldom visible beyond the circle of their own village; whilst, to complete our misfortunes, our chapel-keeper, in the very tremor of fear, turned the key upon us, and declared we should no longer meet in the place.

Our society, thus hopeless, became divided and dismayed; hundreds slunk home to their looms, nor dared to come out, save like owls at nightfall, when they would perhaps steal through by-paths or behind hedges, or down some clough, to hear the news at the next cottage. Some might be seen chatting with and making themselves agreeable to our declared enemies; but these were few, and always of the worst character. Open meetings thus being suspended, secret ones ensued; they were originated at Manchester, and assembled under various pretexts. Sometimes they were termed "benefit societies," sometimes "botanical meetings," "meetings for the relief of the families of imprisoned reformers," or "of those who had fled the country"; but their real purpose, divulged only to the initiated, was to carry into effect the night attack on Manchester, the attempt at which had before failed for want of arrangement and co-operation.

\* In March, 1817, on the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, Cobbett went to America, where he remained two years.

## CHAPTER VII.

SEARCH FOR A TEMPORARY HOME—DOCTOR HEALEY'S PATERNITY  
—SOME ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF—A GLANCE AT THE AUTHOR'S  
ANCESTRY—HEALEY'S UNCLE RICHARD, HIS HOUSE AND  
FAMILY—VIEW FROM KNOWE HILL.

WEARIED at length with the continued alarms of my intended arrest and committal to prison, I consented to leave home for a day or two to find some place where, unknown, I might earn a subsistence until the cloud was blown over, and I could return in safety. Healey, who also had expectations of being wanted shortly, determined to accompany me with a like view; and so, in the thick, grey morning, with light purses and somewhat heavy hearts, we left our humble but dear homes, and struck into the open country—

“Down a quiet green lane where two rindles flow;  
Unto lands where the night-hunters stealthily go;  
Cross'd Roche's dark stream; o'er a barren heath hied;  
And up to the moorlands wild and wide.”

Healey wished to see his uncle Richard, who was a farmer and publican on the moors to the north-west of Middleton; and soon, as the sun broke out and the mist cleared, we found ourselves traversing Hopwood Ley in that direction. How delicious was the air, wafting breezy and free over the budding woods! Now sweeping up the hollows, now coming through the dew pearls and shaking the hazel bloom, now bearing towards us the bold note of the throstle, anon receding to nestle softly in the dingles with the melody of the blackbird! How happy were those simple children of nature—happy in

their loves, in their rude nests ; in their offspring, and in their unconsciousness of danger. The lapwing's plaintive cry as it wheeled above was in unison with our feelings ; the bird also seemed, like ourselves, to have no resting-place ; whilst the cony, frisking before us, and disappearing, showed us he had a home. But the bracing air, the warm, life-giving sun, the glorious beings of nature around and above us, whilst they excited our attention, gradually dispelled the gloom of our feelings, and we also began to be cheerful if not happy, remembering that there is no hill without its vale, no storm without its calm, no shadow without its sun. So we went on—now climbing a hedge, now leaping a rindle, now starting a hare, or springing a woodcock, now treading a bit of swamp, now up a knoll through the gorses, then by the skirt of a meadow, and round to the hill-foot, by the music of a stream, where—

“ Spring moves on as glad we gaze,  
Calling the flowers wherever she strays.  
Come from the earth, ye dwellers there,  
To the blessed light, and the living air :  
For the snowdrop hath warned the drift away ;  
And the crocus awaiteth your company ;  
And the bud of the thorn is beginning to swell ;  
And the waters have broken their bonds in the dell.  
And are not the hazel and slender bine  
Blending their boughs where the sun doth shine ?  
And the willow is bringing its downy palm,  
Garland for days that are bright and calm ;  
And the lady-flower waves on its slender stem ;  
And the primrose peeps like a starry gem.”

Thus tramping o'er Spinthreeds and the Wilderness, we approached Captain Fold, the sight of which led Healey into some remarks on his father, his family, and his own early days.

He said he was born at Captain Fold, where his father lived and was a famous cow-leech, being fetched by the farmers to all parts of the country when their cattle were sick ; that he also dabbled a little in medicines for the human frame, and was successful in most of the cases which he undertook ; and they were such as had baffled common

applications. That his father was a devout man of the Methodist persuasion, and a firm believer in witches and witchcraft, which persuasion he also inherited. That in those days there were many sudden and uncommon disorders, which few persons understood, and fewer still could cope with. Such were often treated by his father on the "supernatural plan," and he was generally successful. He was almost sure to be sent for when cattle were supposed to be amiss from the influence of infernal spells, which he counteracted sometimes by other spells, drugs and herbs prepared at particular seasons, and under certain forms and ceremonials. He had also great faith in the power of faith, and the efficacy of private prayer. He died, however, leaving my companion unprovided for, and he was put apprentice to a cotton weaver at Bolton, where he learned the business, but under such oppressions and cruelties from his master and dame, as instilled into him a thorough abhorrence of tyranny. At the expiration of the term of his bondage he came to Chadderton, where he had a married sister living; and after introducing a new method of twisting-in-warps, by which he saved a little money, and clothed himself respectably, he paid his addresses to his present wife and was accepted, and came to Middleton to reside with his wife and her parents. He accounted for his getting into the surgical profession by supposing that he derived a taste for it from his father. He first began by selling simple drugs; after which he got some books, and ventured to compound and prescribe medicines. Next he succeeded in "breathing a vein"; and lastly became a tooth-drawer, and general practitioner of the surgical art; and now "he was thankful, he needed not turn his back on any of his neighbours in the same line." There was only one point he said, and that was the art obstetric, in which he was deficient; and he hoped to attain that yet. Such were my companion's past trials and present attainments. In sketching his father, however, he omitted one remarkable circumstance, and if he knew it, honour be to his filial regard for the omission; it accords, however, very closely with the son's outline of the remarkable old man. It was said that so firm was his belief in the human application of divine faith, and



such his assurance of being perfected in it, that he ascended the ridge of his barn, in the presence of his assembled neighbours, and after praying for, and exhorting them, he, in the full expectation of being buoyed up, flung himself off, and fell souse on a dung-heap below. Such a misdirection was, of course, a great handle to the ungodly; but in the old man's opinion it was no disproof of the power of faith, but an intimation only of his own weakness and imperfections in that divine attainment.

Doctor Healey, or, "the doctor," as we must now call him, was about five feet six in height; thirty-two or three years of age, with rather good features, small light grey eyes, darker whiskers and hair, with a curl on his forehead, of which he was remarkably proud. He was well-set in body, but light of limb; his knees had an uncommonly supple motion, which gave them an appearance of weakness. He had an assured look, and in walking, especially when with a little "too much wind in the sheet," he turned his toes inward, and carried an air of bravado which was richly grotesque. In disposition he was, until afterwards corrupted, generous and confiding; credulous, proud of his person and acquirements. A book-buyer, but little of a reader, less of a thinker, and no recollector of literary matters. Hence, with an imperturbable self-complacency, he was supremely oblivious of the world, its history, manners, and concerns; except such as directly interfered with the good or evil of his own existence. At this time his attire was scarcely more decent than my own; both were somewhat too seedy, but that was a circumstance on which a learned doctor and a self-devoting patriot could look with indifference.

His hat was somewhat napless, with sundry dinges on the crown, and up-settings and down-flappings of the brim, which showed it to have tugged against harder substances than itself, as well as to have seen much "winter and rough weather." He wore a long drab top-coat, which, from its present appearance, might never have gone through the process of perching. His under-coat was of dark uncut fustian, which, by his almost incessant occupation in the "laboratory,"

preparing ointments, salves, and lotions, had become smooth and shining as a duck's wing, and almost as impervious to wet; his hamsters were similar in material and condition to his coat, whilst his legs were encased in top-boots, no worse for wear, except perhaps a leaky seam or two, and a cracked upper leather. Such was one who will have frequently to make his appearance in this work. He had within him at this time, no doubt, the germs of many faults which might not have appeared at all, had he not been thrown into connections which perverted his naturally simple, inoffensive, and even amiable nature.

But, the reader may say, we have only one of the travellers here; why does not the author furnish a portrait of the other? Behold him then. A young man, twenty-nine years of age; five feet ten inches in height; with long, well-formed limbs, short body, very upright carriage, free motion, and active and lithe, rather than strong. His hair is of a deep dun colour, coarse, straight, and flaky; his complexion a swarthy pale; his eyes, grey, lively, and observant; his features strongly defined and irregular, like a mass of rough and smooth matters which, having been thrown into a heap, had found their own subsidence, and presented, as it were by accident, a profile of rude good nature, with some intelligence. His mouth is small; his lips a little prominent; his teeth white and well set; his nose rather snubby; his cheeks somewhat high; and his forehead deep and rather heavy about the eyes. His hat is not quite so broken, but quite as well worn as the doctor's; his coat of brown cloth, as yet unpatched, but wanting soon to be; his waistcoat of lighter colour, bare and decent; his hamsters of dark kerseymere, grey at the knees; and his stockings of lamb's-wool, with some neat darning above the quarters of his strong nailed shoes. Such, reader, was the personal appearance of him who now endeavours to amuse thee; of the qualities of his mind and disposition an opinion may be formed from this work.

Having crossed the River Roach, we came to the foot of Crimble, where I told Healey the story of Christian and Faithful, at the hill Difficulty, and said I would be his

Faithful, and would help him up this Difficulty. I remarked that he must have many sins to answer for, through his selling of drugs at extortionate prices, quacking a little in his practice, and sometimes drawing sound teeth when he could not find faded ones. He turned on me when we got to the level, and he breathed more freely. He bade me look towards those fields and that venerable hall which one of my ancestors lost by rebellion against a king; and he narrated a story which I had heard before, how, in the Civil Wars, the eldest of two brothers held this estate of Bamford, and fought against the king, who was dethroned, and at the restoration the elder brother fled into exile and died there, leaving his children heirs only to poverty and obscurity; meantime his younger brother, who had fought on the royal side, was put into possession of the hall and estates, and thus they descended from him to the last of the name who held the property. Healey remarked that I indeed had not an estate to lose, but was taking a fair course for losing my head, and was already an outcast wanderer on lands belonging to my ancestors.

On coming to Bakslate Moor, Healey said the neighbourhood was formerly infested by witches. His father had often been called upon to counteract their infernal schemes. He firmly believed all this, and I did not combat his opinion: on the contrary, I said I was sure it had been a place of witches. He asked why I believed so. I bid him notice it; did it not look like a barren and withered land, full of slate pits, rushy knobs, and dry wiry grass, from which even asses turned away? Besides, I had been witched myself by one of them. Healey looked serious, and inquiringly. I assured him I had. I was so bewitched that on a midsummer morning one of them withdrew me to a place where I gave myself to her for life; and the charm remained so strong that I had never yet attempted to break it, nor even wished to do so. He smiled on perceiving my meaning, and said he was not alluding to the witchcraft of love.

We now began to ascend the road leading to the moors, and a climb of about two miles brought us upon the level of the



hill at Ashworth Moor ; soon after which we came in sight of Learock Hoyle, in modern English, "Lark's Hole," a substantial hostel and farmhouse, which Healey informed me was his uncle Richard's, or Dick's, as he sometimes called him. The old man was at work in a stone quarry near the roadside ; he was about sixty years of age, strong and active for his time of life, and hearty too, for he came out of the quarry, and gave us a blunt and frank welcome, and took us into the house. His wife was a remarkably clever and good-looking woman, much younger than her husband, and the very personification of a managing, self-confident, and civil landlady. Two fine thriving lasses, taking after their mother, and a son more like his father, were their stock of children. And here this family had lived many years, contented with a sufficiency of plain comforts, at a lone house on the borders of a moor. I could not but reflect on the advantages they must derive from thus enjoying life freely in a world of their own, and with a moderation which gave promise of a long continuance. They seemed but little affected by what was going on, politically, in the districts below and around them ; they were clear of the anxieties and tumults of business, which were heart-rending, and distracting the inhabitants of the great towns situated within their view, and, in fact, within their hearing (for we could distinguish the noise of the lumbering roll of the carriages, like the eternal moan of a distant sea) ; and contrasting the quietness of this nest, this "Hole of the Lark," with the errors and terrors of scenes I had quitted, I could not but detect my yearnings for a shelter with those I loved in some quiet nook little known and seldom visited.

Having rested and taken refreshment, we went strolling upon the moor, and ascended Knowe, or Knowl Hill, from whence we had an extensive prospect. In the distance on our left were the moors towards Todmorden and Walsden ; following the horizon, we next saw the ridge of Blackstone Edge, streaked with sun gleams and dark shadows ; then the moors of Saddleworth, particularly Oaphin with his white drifts still lingering, and Odermon with his venerable relics of Druidism, his "Pots an' Pans." The mountains of Derbyshire and



Cheshire rose like a region of congealed waves, whilst Vale Royal, to the south, lay reposing in a glorious sun, and the country towards Liverpool was bounded by a bright streak, probably the Irish Sea. A dim white vapour indicated the site of Preston or Blackburn; Bolton seemed near at hand, and Bury close on our right below. Manchester, Stockport, Ashton, Oldham, and Rochdale were distinctly visible, and neither last nor least regarded, was one small speck—it was the white end of a house at Heabers, which directed our looks to the misty vapour of Middleton, rising beside dark woods from the vale in which the town is situated. That was the smoke of our own hearths, heaped by those who were thinking of us. We could almost see them: whisht! could we not hear the voices of our children? of their mothers calling them home? And in the fond imagination we shouted their names, but there was no reply; and then, feeling we were cut off and outcast, we more sadly understood the human desolateness of Him who said, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.”

But even in this wild region were objects to call us back to reality, and teach us that in every situation there is something to be thankful for; that—

“There is mercy in every place,”

and that a bounteous Creator is nowhere unmindful of those He has called into life. A beautiful spring of water, pure as a cup from heaven’s banquet, was gently brimming over a basin of white sand and pebbles, into which it arose. A sward of sweet green grass lined the margin of a silvery band that lay glimmering and trickling on the sunny side of the hill, whilst here and there were tufts of rushes glistening with liquid pearls. We took the water in our hands and drank “to our families and friends”; “to our suffering brethren everywhere”; “to the downfall of tyranny and soon”; and “to liberty,” with three huzzas. An old black-faced tup lifted his horns from the heather, looked gravely at us, and giving a significant bleat, scampered off, followed by such of his acquaintance as were browsing near.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE VALLEY OF HOLCOMBE—HEALEY IN FULL PRACTICE—THE WOMAN OF MUSBURY.

ON the morning following we bid our worthy host and his family good-bye, and after taking the way towards Edenfield a short distance, we struck into a deep stony road on our left, and descended to the valley of Holcombe. We had counted our stock of money after turning out, and found it to be greatly diminished; for as Uncle Richard refused pay for our board and lodging, we had spent in liquor more freely than we otherwise should have done, and our finances were now exceedingly light. Our intention was to enter Bolton that night, where Healey had a brother possessed of property, who he thought would either assist him with a little money, or find him a retreat for a short time, whilst I could easily get a loom in some of the neighbouring villages. But this plan was afterwards abandoned, as will shortly be seen.

After traversing this beautiful valley for some distance we entered a publichouse and took seats in the kitchen. A stumpy, rosy-cheeked lass, with cherry-ripe lips, and arms as red as apples, served us with ale; after which a decent elderly dame came in and told her to "goo an' get some moor o' that stuff, for Mary's tooth wur no betther." I nudged the doctor, who immediately took the hint, and informed the dame, with his best grace, that if any of the family were ill of the tooth-ache he could either cure it or take out the tooth. She said her daughter had got it very bad, and was in another room. Healey said he was a surgeon, and would extract it if she liked. "Well, really," said she, with surprise, looking at his

unctuous clothes, "yo may be a doctur, but you look'n more like a kawve-lad." Healey seemed offended, and I assured the dame that he was "as regular a bred surgeon as ever wur born ov a woman"—and in confirmation Healey pulled out a case of lancets and his tooth-drawing instrument. At this moment a young woman entered the room with her face rolled in flannel, and one cheek puffed and swollen. Her mother told her what Healey said, and being in extreme anguish, she suffered him to examine her mouth, after which he assured her it would be a mere flea-bite, and he could have the tooth out in "no time," and at last she consented to have it drawn. I never liked to hear the crash of bones pulled out of living flesh, and so I walked into the yard, but had not been there a minute ere a piercing scream called me in again, and I beheld the young woman on the floor sputtering blood, and the doctor also on the floor near the fire, and literally swamped in a pool of cream, the mug of which lay in fragments beside him. I saw there was no murder in the case, and if my life had been at stake I could not have refrained from loud and hearty laughter. I assisted the young woman to rise, but my mirth was abated when, on spitting out, two teeth instead of one dropped into her lap. The doctor, meantime, had got up and began to wipe the fluid from his face and clothes; he was quite silent and looked very rueful. The old woman now came into the place, and with her two men, one of whom we soon understood to be a constable, and the other an overseer. "These ar um," she said, "yo seen what havock theyn made, an iv ye hadno comn they met ha' kilt us for owt I kno.' That little devil pretended to be a doctur, an' put a pair o' pincers into th' wench's meawth, an' has very nee poo'd her yed off; an' th' tother's no better nor him. Beside, theyn brokken my mug an' shed my kryem." "An' look at theese," said the patient, casting an enraged glance at the doctor, "hee's poo'd two teeth eawt istid o' one." The doctor begged to be heard; the constable said he "had bin sworn at Howkham Kwort, an' munt do his duty; an' iv thur wur a charge he munt take us afore a magistrate." The overseer said, "that wur reet, ackwordin' to Burn's justice." I



did not relish the idea of going before a magistrate just at that time, lest something might escape as to who we were and what had brought us into that part, so I said I and my friend were quite ready to go with the gentlemen anywhere to have this misfortune explained; but as they appeared to be men of good understanding and respectable manners, and seemed to know something of law, I thought the matter might as well be talked over a little, and if a glass of something to drink were added it would not, at any rate, make matters worse than they were. This was declared to be very reasonable by all parties, and accordingly we adjourned with the officers to another room, and were soon afterwards joined by two persons, apparently farmers; and a jug of warm ale with some grated ginger in, and I think also a dash of the first syllabled liquid, being placed on the table, with tobacco and pipes, we drew round the fire. Healey now requested that the young woman might be called, and she making her appearance, he very submissively requested to see the teeth; they were produced, and he then wished to examine her mouth without his instruments, which was also conceded after some persuasion, when he cleverly slipped one of the teeth, a sound one, into the orifice from which it had been taken, gently compressed the gum to make it close up, and ordering a squib of rum, with directions to keep it in her mouth a minute, and then put it out, he declared she was as well as ever. The patient did as she was bid, only instead of putting out the rum she swallowed it, and then said she thought she was better. This made Healey proud as chanticleer, and taking a hearty draught of the ale, he said he would not stand in second place to any doctor they could produce in the whole country. The overseer was next instituted chairman, and the dame of the house was called; asked what was her charge, she said as her daughter was better, she would only charge five shillin' for "th' mug breakin' an' kryem sheedin', an' if that wur sattl't o' wud be reet." The doctor said he thought the case was a very hard one, for he had done his patient a great service at the risk of his limbs almost. The young woman, he said, was in a most favourable position for the operation, the extractors



were fixed, and he was bringing out the tooth very nicely, when she screamed, threw up her foot, with which she took him in the ribs, and sent him to the other end of the room, where he alighted slap against the wall, and falling on the mug, broke it, and was at the same time seriously bruised himself. The young woman was asked if that was true. She replied, she believed it was; and the company then agreed that, as there was no charge except for damage, the patient had best pay half-a-crown for tooth-drawing, and the doctor three shillings for the mug and cream. The doctor heard the decision with a kind of inward groan, for nothing hurt his feelings more than paying money when he should be receiving it. He, however, threw down one of the few sixpences which he had left, and the old woman took it in settlement of the damage. This matter being adjusted, we were partaking another pot, when a man came in from Bolton, and in conversing said the Radicals were in great alarm there, it being reported that King's officers had arrived in London for the purpose of arresting some of the leaders, and that the police were very sharp on the look-out for them. This information was not lost by us, and we exchanged significant glances without being observed.

We were talking on various matters when the door was opened, and a personally fine-looking woman, with an infant at the breast, advanced timidly and said she wished to speak to the overseer. Her outer garments were of very homely material, being seemingly cotton fents dyed blue, but neatly fitting her person, and very clean. She had a pair of light clogs on her feet, and her stockings were, I could perceive, well darned above the buckles. Her petticoat and bedgown were of the same blue cotton, and the latter was open at the bosom, where a fine boy lay smiling at his pap. Her apron was striped calico, and her headgear consisted of a striped napkin, apparently also a fent, over a mob cap, very white, from beneath which a lock of black hair had escaped, and hung as if in contrast with a bosom of as pure white as ever appertained to human nature. Her features also were handsome; her cheeks were faintly tinged on a very pale ground; her mouth was somewhat wan; she seemed rather

exhausted, and as she stood the tears came into her dark and modest eyes. "Weer dusto com fro'," asked the overseer, "an' wat dusto want? theawrt a new un at ony rate," he continued. She said she came from Musbury, and wanted relief for her husband, herself, and two children, besides the infant. "An' wot dun yo do for a livin'?" interrogated the overseer. They wove calico, she said, when they could get work and were able; but the children at home were ill of the measles; the shopkeeper had refused them any more credit, and her husban' had "wurched for 'em till he fell off his looms, and wur beginnin' o'th' feyver, th' docthur said so." "Hang thoose docthurs," said the overseer, "why conno' they let foke dee when thur time comes." "I hope he'll no' dee yet," said the poor woman, tears streaming in plenty. "I think he'd com' reawnd iv yo'd nobbut let us have a trifle o' summut to carry on wi'; an' iv yo' win" (intreatingly) "I'll hie me whom, an' I'll put th' chylt i'th' keyther an' set at yon wark, an' I'll finish it mysel'; an' we'en not trouble yo' ogen unless we'en sum new misfortin'." The overseer asked the farmers, who, it appeared, were ratepayers, what they thought of the case; and the result was that he gave her two shillings, and promised to call and see the family. But she must tell her husband he must not begin of the fever. "Its o' idelty, idelty; an' iv th' paupers o'th' teawn yerd 'at he geet owt wi' bein' ill o'th' feyver, they'd o' begin." "Nowe, nowe, theyd'n ha' no feyvers i' their teawnship." She took the money, curtseyed, and thanked the overseer and ratepayers. One of them said she had been "a decent wench"; he knew her father in better days, and offered her a glass of the warm ale, which she put to her lips and swallowed a small quantity. Her cheeks turned deadly pale; she put out her hand as if her sight was gone, her grasp relaxed, the child dropped on Healey's knee, and I caught the fainting woman in my arms. "Hoo's clem'd to dyeth," said one of the ratepayers. "Hoo's as dyed as a dur nail," said the other. "I didno' deny her relief," said the overseer. The doctor handed the child to the landlady, and called for some brandy, which was brought, together with a sharp smelling-

bottle, which was applied, but there was not any perceptible breathing, and she shrunk down seated upon the floor, I kneeling and still keeping her in a leaning posture.

And shall I be ashamed to say that, whilst I thus held her, tears escaped, and chased down a furrow already made by care on that cold and pale brow? Oh, no! could I have withheld my deepest sympathy from that beauteous mother, my sister in humanity, perishing thus for want of food, my heart must have turned to stone. Healey chafed her temples with the liquor, sprinkled her face with water, opened her hands, and tried to get a drop of liquid into her mouth, but her teeth were set. "Poor thing," said the doctor, "she must have been very ill." "Hoo's dun for i' this ward," said one of the men. "I relieft hur," said the overseer, "for I seed hoo'r none o' eawr reggilur paupers." "We shan ha' to have an inquest," said the constable. "Moor expense, an' moor," said the overseer; "but they conno' say 'at I neglected 'em, con they?" Whilst these observations and many others were passing, the features of the sufferer became less rigid, the jaw relaxed; a drop of brandy and water was administered; a slight tinge of pink appeared on her cheeks; the chafings and smellings were continued; a sigh after some time escaped, and in a minute or two those dark-fringed eyes unclosed; she looked inquiringly around, and soon appeared to comprehend her situation. In a short time she was restored; her child was again pressed to her bosom, the two shillings were made up to five, she took a cup of warm tea with the family, and in another hour she was slowly wending up the hill towards Musbury.

## CHAPTER IX.

### BURY—A NIGHT HAG—THE HUSH SHOP.

It was dark when we entered the neat country town of Bury ; for, after what we heard of the state of things at Bolton, we deemed it best to avoid that neighbourhood ; probably, also, we were influenced by a natural leaning towards home ; and, in consequence, though scarcely determined, we were travelling thitherward ere we had agreed so to end our journey. After the departure of the woman, we consented to another libation with our new acquaintance, and our stay was prolonged at some risk, as questions were asked, and suppositions expressed, which required more caution than it was agreeable to maintain. My little comrade also was, in his own estimation, become a very big man, and a most important personage. The liquor was getting into his head, and he showed his wonted inclination for "sprozing," the best exemplification of which is that of a turkey-cock spreading his feathers. It was at the sacrifice of a considerable share of vanity that he was restrained from telling the constable and overseer who and what he was, his great abilities—which he would have proved by singing and recitations (in both of which he murdered everything he uttered)—and his great practice, and the cures he had effected. I therefore got him away decently ; and our next halting-place was "The Grey Mare," a public-house opposite the church in the aforementioned market town. We were both hungry, not having tasted food since morning ; we bought a steak, which we wished to have cooked at this house, but were informed it could not be done ; "they had something else to do than to cook steaks on Saturday nights."



The place indeed was full of customers, apparently country people, come to the town to make their markets, so we went on to the next house, where our meat was cooked, and we washed it down with a jug of pretty good ale. There was here also much company; and we learned from their conversation that several persons had been arrested the day before for high treason at Manchester, and that two of them were named Ogden and Johnson. This was no very encouraging news to us; nor were our feelings tranquillised when, soon after, a respectable-looking, rather elderly man came into the room, and, surveying the company round, went away without saying a word. We soon learned that he was the deputy-constable of the town, and this incident hastened our departure.

The night was cloudy and overcast, but the glare of the shops threw a good light into the street, which was well filled with market people. We were anxious to get out of the way, and resolved to take the field road, as being most calculated to favour escape if we should be pursued, as well as to prevent pursuit. We accordingly inquired the way to "Gig Bridge," and, following our directions, we found ourselves, after a short walk, on the bank of an apparently deep stream, which we knew must be the Roach; and following its course we were soon on a narrow wooden bridge, which we passed without any of that unpleasant motion which had obtained for it the reputation of a dangerous passage. The clouds now, instead of blowing off, as we had thought they would, became more thick, and the night darker. We knew little of the way; Healey not a foot of it, and I had only a slight notion of its general direction. At the worst, however, we could take the hunter's road till we came to a house. The path led us between a high bank on our right, and what, in the darkness, seemed to be a deep and tangled wood on our left. Proceeding cautiously, for the road was crooked and uneven, we came to the verge of the wood, where two roads lay before us; and we were considering which to take, when the light of a lanthorn flashed close upon us, and we asked the person who bore it (a woman) where the two roads led to. She was low in stature, with an old red cloak thrown over her shoulders, and a handkerchief,

tied hoodlike, around her head and face. She held the light up to Healey as he stood next to her, and looked at him steadfastly, and I had an opportunity for observing that she was considerably aged. Some thin locks of grey hair were streaming in the wind and flapping across her face; her eyebrows were expansive and grey; and her two quick, dark eyes, set in wrinkles, seemed peculiarly brilliant for her age. Her face was furrowed and brown; her features had been regular, perhaps handsome, but now appeared careworn and anxious; and her teeth were still even and white. She evidently had not been a-marketing, as she had not either bundle or basket, but held a stick, on which she leaned, in one hand, and the lanthorn in the other. "Good mother," said Healey, "weer dun theese two roads lyed to?" "To mony places i' this ward," she replied, "an' mayhap some i'th' tother. This," pointing to the left, "lyeds to th' Frogg Hole, an' Yep-fowd, an' Yeddy Hill, on th' Top o' Yep; an' that," pointing to the one before us, "lyeds to th' Hollins, an' th' Cat Hole, an' th' Castle, an' Thurston-fowd. But weer dun yo' want to goo to," she asked, "o'er sitch a 'wilderin' counthry, an' sitch o' neet as this?" We said we were strangers, but if we could find Whittle or Bowlee we should be right. "Follow me, then," she said, and immediately stepped out at a pace which we little expected. Healey followed close after the lanthorn, now making an observation more free than wise; now asking questions, some of which must have sounded mysteriously to our guide. "Yo're no' meety good uns, I daresay," she muttered. "Yo're as like excisemen as owt 'at I ever see'd." Healey seemed wishful to humour the supposition, and asked if there were any hush shops in that part of the country. She turned round, thrust the light's full glare close to his face, and, with a furious voice and gesture, said, "Hush, foo; keep the secret; iv I dunno' tell the' theaw winno' know." That moment lanthorn and lanthorn-bearer disappeared, and the next there was a crash and a plash. Healey had fallen through a hedge, down a steep bank, and into the channel of a brook. I should have followed him, but saved myself from going over by clasping a young tree, by which I held; whilst,

stooping down, I got hold of my companion, and he was again safely landed.

After some puffing and gasping, and sundry emphatic wishes bestowed on "the owd hag," as Healey called our late guide, I reminded him that he had brought it upon himself by pretending to be an exciseman, and pressing unpleasant questions about the neighbourhood. "Where was the owd limb?" he asked. Had she sunk into th' earth, or flown into th' air? "Hoo went in a flash as quick as gun-shot—lanthorn, leet, an' o'—an' nobody should make him believe 'at hoo wur owt elze but an arrant witch." I said it was a strange occurrence, and not to be exactly accounted for at that time; but it was no use standing there—we must move in some direction, or we should not get home before daylight. So we groped about, and at last perceived a tree which lay across the gully, over which we stepped, holding by the branches, and soon had footing on a rising ground and an open field, over which we were directing our course, when our attention was excited by a laugh of almost unearthly tone, which came like a jeering yell upon the wind; and, looking towards our right, we perceived below us, at some distance, a light, dancing, as it were, and moving at a rapid pace through the profound darkness. "There gwos yon beldame, an' crone, an' hoo devil, on' bowt an' sowd infernal as hoo is," said Healey. The laugh was renewed, but sounded fainter, and almost like a scream of pain; and the next moment the light began to descend, and suddenly disappeared as if sunk into the earth. An exclamation of horror and surprise escaped my companion; and we continued over an uneven country—now by the roar of waters and weirs, now across dingles, levels, and swamps—until at length espying a glimmer which was stationary, we concluded it must come from a house, and, hastening forwards, we soon heard noises of song, laughter, and revelry; and, finding they proceeded from a human habitation which we thought must be a tavern, we opened the door and entered without ceremony.



## CHAPTER X.

AN INTERIOR—A RECEPTION—A BATTLE—AN OPERATION IN SURGERY—HOME.

THE building was thatched, and consisted of several rooms on the ground floor, two of which were occupied by company. The room into which we entered was a square one, with a good fire of turf and wood burning opposite the door. On the centre of the floor stood a kind of low table, formed of an inner door which had been lifted from its hinges, and placed on bricks and logs of wood to serve as a table, and on it two candles in clay sockets were burning. About a dozen pots, of nearly all sorts and shapes, were upon the table; each pot containing ale, or what appeared to be so. The room was dimmed by tobacco smoke; but we could discern not fewer than some eight or ten men seated in various parts of it, some on stools, some on piled bricks, some on logs of wood; whilst others occupied empty firkins, mugs capsized, or any other article affording a seat. The company was not less dissimilar in appearance, though all seemed of the labouring class. Some were farm servants, some factory workers, and some were weavers; there were also one or two, who we found were poor men, but not workers at any branch, being known sots, bullies, and occasionally thieves. The other room was occupied by customers much the same as these; but the blows on their table, and the tremendous cursings, told us they were at high words about a game at cards. On our entering, all eyes were directed towards us, and the hum of their voices was hushed to silence. "Well, what dun yo' want," said a brawny dark-bearded fellow, turning towards us with a most



unwelcoming look. I informed him we had lost our way, and merely called to inquire about it; but, as we were in the house, we would taste his ale if he had no particular objection. "Wot are yo', an' weer dun yo' come fro'," was demanded sternly; several of the company rising and repeating the questions. I said that if it was of consequence to the master or mistress of the place, they should know before we went away. If we drank their ale, we would satisfy them for it, and whether we had any or not, there would not be any harm done, we supposed.

"Mother! come heer;" shouted the dark man from the stair's foot; when, who should make her appearance but the same old woman who about an hour before had vanished so unaccountably. "Excisemen!" "Informers!" she screamed, at the top of a thrilling voice; and at that moment each man of the company was on his feet; hands were clutching at our throats, and a prospect of certain manglement or murder stared from those ferocious countenances. A crash in the next room, and a smashing of pots was heard; and whilst we were vainly, as it seemed, endeavouring to evade our fate, a stout, low-built man, rather decently clad, and with a weaver's green apron twisted around his middle, rushed into the room, said he knew us both well, that we were neither excisemen nor informers, and that he would pledge his life for us. The company then fell back; candles were brought, a circle was formed around us, gazing in curiosity and doubt, and at last we were permitted to sit down and partake of the ale. The old woman, however, persisted that we were excisemen, or sent by the Excise, and narrated what Healey had asked, and how she slipped the light under her cloak at a sudden turn of the road, leaving Healey to walk into a ditch, and his comrade after him. This caused a loud laugh at our expense; and it was repeated when we admitted that it was true except in one particular. Our friend the poacher, for such he was, meantime had taken the dark-bearded youth, the son, aside, and explained our names and condition to him, he whispered to his mother, and a word was passed round, which caused an entire change of manner to us by the whole company. I felt

a curiosity to observe human nature in such a place, and being now readily supplied with ale, I took my pipe, and listened with some interest to the conversation ; whilst Healey made himself agreeable by singing, in his best manner,

“ The deil cam fiddlin’ thro’ the toon,  
An’ danc’d awa wi’ th’ exciseman.”

We had not, however, been at peace long, ere the carders in the next room again quarrelled, and proceeded to that length, that a battle was determined upon. Lights—of candles and pitch-rope, and bog-pine—were procured, and the combatants stripped, and accompanied by every man, went into a small plot of ground behind the house. The combatants were our friend the poacher, and another man, younger and heavier, who chiefly earned his living by dog breaking, and understrapping to gamekeepers and their masters. Betwixt the men there had been an unfriendly feeling for some time, and now, over this potent ale, for it was good, though new, their hostility was again excited, and probably decided. The ring was formed with as much silence as possible. The men stripped to their waists, and then kneeled down and tied their shoes fast on their feet. They then dogged for the first grip, much as game cocks do for the first fly ; and after about a minute so spent, they rushed together and grappled, and in a moment the dog-man gave the poacher a heavy kick on the knee, and was at the same time thrown violently on the ground, on his back, his antagonist alighting on him like “ a bag of bones.” It was now a ground fight for some time, and exhibited all the feats of a Lancashire battle, which I take to have been derived from a very remote date, long before the “ Art of Self-defence,” or indeed, almost any other art, was known in these islands. There was not, however, any of that gouging of the eyes, or biting the flesh, or tearing, or lacerating other parts, which are so often imputed to Lancashire fighters by cockney sportsmen and others, who know little about them. It was all fair play, though certainly of a rough sort, and as thorough a thing of the kind as I had ever seen. Doggy, after gaining breath, tried to turn on his belly, which Poacher aimed

to prevent, pressing the wind out of him by his weight upon the chest as he lay across him, and at times throttling him until his eyes stared as if they were looking into another world. In one of those suffocating agonies, Doggy flung round one leg, and locked it in one of his opponent's, and in a moment they were twisted together like the knot of a boa-constrictor; and the next, Doggy turned on his belly, and got upon his knees. There was a loud shout, and much cursing and swearing; and several bets were offered and taken as to the issues of the contest. Poacher now laid all the weight he could on Doggy's head and neck, to prevent him from getting upright. He grasped him below the arms, and kept clutching his throat; and the latter, for want of breath to carry on with, kept tearing his hands from their grip: both snorted like porpoises, and it began to appear that our friend Poacher was the worst for wind. Some heavy kicking now ensued, until the white bones were seen grinning through the gashes in their legs, and their stockings were soaked in blood. Poacher was evidently a brave man, though now coming second; in one of his struggles, Doggy freed himself and rushed on Poacher with a kick that made the crew set their teeth and look for splintered bones: and Poacher stood it though he felt it. There was another clutch, and a sudden fling, in which Poacher was uppermost, and Doggy, falling with his neck doubled under, rolled over and lay without breath or motion, black in the face, and with blood oozing from his ears and nostrils. All said he was killed, and that opinion probably softened the shout of triumph which was set up by those who had won their bets. The doctor, who had been trodden out of the ring during the battle, was now loudly called for; and at length, with that air of important gravity so habitual to the "profession," he approached along an avenue made through these wildlings, and, kneeling by the man on one side, Poacher being on the other, holding a pitch torch in great concernment, he felt for a pulse, declared there was none, and, binding the arm, he pulled out a lancet, and opened a vein cleverly, the blood, as if still in battle, dashing hot and red in Poacher's face—a circumstance which made



some laugh and others look grave, it being taken by them as a dying accusation of murder. The man bled freely, the blood trickling into a dark red sud on the trodden grass. Poacher presented a picture of horror and misery. After the accident he stepped aside, and putting on his shirt, returned to the ring, where he took his station as before described, looking with intense anxiety on the livid features of his prostrate foe. He had wiped the blood from his own eyes with his knuckles, and the ghastly white of those cavities, contrasting with the gore on his cheek and beard, now parched and glittering in the torch-light, gave him an appearance of more than mortal horror and despair. The arm being bound up, Doggy was conveyed into the house and laid on the table, a turf or two being placed under his head, by way of pillow. He had, to the great joy of Poacher, begun to breathe during the bleeding, and now appeared in a sound sleep, and the doctor assured the Poacher he would come round in a short time; he had only been a little "stunished," which had "brought on a fainting fit," and he would soon be better. Poacher was most grateful for the information; he declared he would never fight again, and swore the doctor was the finest man in all England, and that if one hare only was living on Lord Suffield's grounds, he should have it for his stew-pot next Sunday. The doctor enjoyed his triumph; he drank to the company all round, not omitting the wounded man, who remained motionless and prostrate. Some of them said his neck was awry, and the doctor, examining him more minutely, bathed his head in cold water; after which, adjusting the neck, he got two staves of a butter tub, and placing one on each side, resting on the shoulders, and jutting above the head, he tied them firmly but gently with a couple of red cotton hanks, and the man soon after opening his eyes, though scarcely sensible, he was conveyed home on the shoulders of his party. The doctor then dressed Poacher's wounds; we soon after left the place, guided into the road by Poacher, who was going that way, and arrived at Middleton without further adventure.

And, shall we part here, friend reader? On my very threshold shall we part? Nay, come in from the frozen rain, and



from the night wind, which is blowing the clouds into sheets like torn sails before a gale. Now down a step or two.\* 'Tis better to keep low in the world than to climb only to fall. It is dark, save when the clouds break into white scud above, and silent, except the snort of the wind, and the rattling of hail, and the eaves of dropping rain. Come in! A glimmer shows that the place is inhabited, that the nest has not been rifled whilst the old bird was away. Now shalt thou see what a miser a poor man can be in his heart's treasury. A second door opens, and a flash of light shows we are in a weaving room, clean and flagged, and in which are two looms with silken work of green and gold. A young woman, of short stature, fair, round, and fresh as Hebe; with light brown hair escaping in ringlets from the sides of her clean cap, and with a thoughtful and meditative look, sits darning beside a good fire, which sheds warmth upon the clean swept hearth and gives light throughout the room, or rather cell. A fine little girl, seven years of age, with a sensible and affectionate expression of countenance, is reading in a low tone to her mother:

"And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake."

Observe the room and its furniture. A humble but cleanly bed, screened by a dark old-fashioned curtain, stands on our left. At the foot of the bed is a window, closed from the

\* The cottage is still to be seen. It is at the end of a row, and recent changes in the front street have almost turned it into a cellar dwelling.

looks of all street passers. Next are some chairs, and a round table of mahogany; then another chair, and next it a long table, scoured very white. Above that is a looking-glass with a picture on each side, of the Resurrection and Ascension, on glass, "copied from Rubens." A well-stocked shelf of crockery ware is the next object, and in a nook near it are a black oak carved chair or two, with a curious desk, or box to match; and lastly, above the fireplace, are hung a rusty basket-hilted sword, an old fusee, and a leathern cap. Such are the appearance and furniture of that humble abode. But my wife?

"She look'd; she reddened like the rose;  
Syne, pale as ony lily."

Ah! did they hear the throb of my heart, when they sprung to embrace me—my little love child to my knees, and my wife to my bosom?

Such were the treasures I had hoarded in that lowly cell—treasures that, with contentment, would have made into a palace

"the lowest shed  
That ever rose in England's plain."

They had been at prayers, and were reading the Testament before retiring to rest. And now, as they a hundred times caressed me, they found that indeed, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

## CHAPTER XI.

A MIDNIGHT VISITANT—A SECRET MEETING—A PLOT—OLIVER  
THE SPY—HIS FIRST ESSAY IN THE WAY OF BUSINESS.

ABOUT the middle of the night, on the night after my return home, we were awoke by a gentle knocking at our outer door. I arose and asked who was there. A voice replied, "A friend;" and I opened the door, and a man walked in, muffled up to the eyes. I asked him who he was; when, half laughing, in his natural voice he said, "Don't you know me?" and I then recognised him as my most intimate acquaintance and co-delegate at London. He said he had particular reasons for coming disguised, and at that unseasonable hour, and that he wished to see me and some half-dozen of our most trusty reformers in the morning, at the house of a friend whom he named, residing at Stanniccliffe, a short distance from Middleton. I promised to attend him as desired, and he departed. At the time appointed, myself and several others went to the house, and being shown into a private room with our visitant, he commenced by entering into details of his private business transactions, from which it appeared that he was greatly embarrassed, and knew not how to extricate himself. He had been at various places; at home he durst not remain, and had last come from London, where he had been in communication with some of the best friends to reform, who, with himself, had come to a determination to strike a decisive blow at once. He then detailed a plan which, if acted upon with energy, would, he said, effect all that was required. Some ten or a dozen of our best men were to

provide themselves with arms, and march to London, where they would be joined by others, and, at a time agreed upon, the united body were to rush upon the ministers at a cabinet council, or a dinner, and assassinate the whole of them. All London would then rise; the population would subdue all before it; the country would be our own, and a new Government would be established. Our arms were to consist of a stout walking staff, with a socket at one end for the reception of a dagger, which, he said, "may be easily made from the blade of a common knife, such as this," (taking one from the table). Pistols might also be carried by those who could procure them. When asked how the money for the journey was to be raised, he pulled a gold watch from his pocket, and said, if no other means were left, he would dispose of that to raise money. This would not do: it was rather too bare a trap. Besides, it was far wide of our code of reform, and we declined having anything to do with it. We also endeavoured to dissuade him from lending himself to such projects; and we left him without making any impression upon him.

The fact was, this unfortunate person, in the confidence of an unsuspecting mind, as I believe, had, during one of his visits to London, formed a connection with Oliver the spy, which connection, during several succeeding months, gave a new impulse to secret meetings and plots in various parts of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Derbyshire, and ended in the tragedy of Brandreth, Ludlam, and Turner, at Derby. This was probably Oliver's first demonstration on his "professional tour:" it failed—but from that very week, private meetings, for highly criminal purposes, again commenced. Agents came from Manchester, and glided through the country, depositing their poison wherever they could. Meetings were held at Blackley; two or three at Middleton; one or two at Chadderton; the same at Failsworth; and again at Manchester, where some fools and their deluders having been collected, a partial explosion took place, of which further notice will occur shortly.

Let us not, however, in recounting these transactions, lay blame where it ought not to be. Let us not confound the



blind instrument with the intelligent agent who directed it. If the individual before alluded to, our mysterious visitant, erred greatly in these matters, he suffered for his error. A leading provincial journalist, with much apparent truth, afterwards stigmatised him as "a spy;" the sore obloquy stuck to him long, and whether it has yet been entirely removed admits of doubt. But, had he been a spy, he would not have been left to struggle with poverty and disgrace in England, but would have been removed and provided for, as Oliver was. Had he been a spy he would have betrayed those who never were betrayed. We may allow that he was credulous and inconsiderate, and consequently unfit to be a leader in those or any other times; but this is far short of an admission that he was a co-villain with Oliver. He was an egregious dupe, no doubt, but he was not a spy.

If it be asked, why did not you, as consistent and honest reformers, denounce this plot to the government at once as, in obedience to the laws, you ought to have done? My reply is, because we were persuaded the government knew of it already; that, consequently, if attempted it would fail; and lastly, because we had accepted the man's confidence, and he had placed his safety in our hands. This last dilemma may serve to caution others how they accept responsibilities which may lead to criminality or dishonour.

## CHAPTER XII.

TREASONABLE MEETING AT ARDWICK BRIDGE—APPREHENSION  
OF THE DELEGATES—ARREST OF THE AUTHOR—OCCUR-  
RENCES AT ROYTON, OLDHAM, AND MANCHESTER.

I HAD reprehended the doctor freely for attending one or two of the private meetings before alluded to, and he had avoided my company during nearly a fortnight, when, on the morning of Saturday, the 29th of March, he suddenly made his appearance at my residence, and with a woeful look asked if I had heard of the arrest of the delegates at a private meeting, at Ardwick Bridge, the night previous. I said I had heard of the transaction; it was only what I had been expecting, and I had offended him by speaking my opinion. He said he wished I would go to his house for a short consultation; I went, and found there one William Elson, who had been connected with one or two of these meetings. They wished for my advice as to what was best to be done under the circumstances.

Amongst the persons arrested was John Lancashire, a Middleton man, who had been delegated from a meeting at which both of my friends, as I understood, had attended. I blamed them for having anything to do with private meetings, and advised them, they having committed themselves, to leave home for a time, as I had not a doubt the police were in possession of their names and would be after them. Elson I said might go anywhere, as he was not much known: Healey I advised to go to his brother at Bolton, and get some money, and keep out of sight entirely, until something further was known. His best way would be to avoid Manchester,

and go over Kersal moor and Agecroft bridge ; and as I had a relation in that quarter who wished to see me, I would keep him company as far as Agecroft. My advice was adopted ; Elson went to prepare for his flight, and Healey commenced doing the same. I was now informed that Lancashire had a pike concealed in his house, and I went thither and got that destroyed. On my return, instead of finding Healey ready he was busy combing his hair, and adjusting his neckcloth. I urged him to get away if he valued his life ; and after some further delay I saw him fairly on the road, and then went to prepare myself, and in a few minutes I set out after him. We had appointed to meet at Rhodes, Healey taking a circuitous road over Bowlee, whilst I went a nearer but still indirect way through Alkrington wood.

I was walking towards the churchyard at my usual leisurely, but rather swift pace, quite satisfied that Healey was out of all danger of being captured, and without the remotest idea of any peril to myself, when a voice hallooed, and looking back I beheld Joseph Scott, the deputy-constable of Middleton, hastening towards me. I concluded instantly that he wanted me ; and disdaining the thought of flying, I returned and met him, and he took hold of me, saying I was the King's prisoner. I asked him what for ? and he said I should see presently ; and we had not gone many yards on our return when we were met by Mr. Nadin,\* the deputy-constable of Manchester, and about six or eight police officers, all well armed with staves, pistols, and blunderbusses : two of these took hold of me, and the whole party marched back to the doctor's house.

Here they handcuffed me ; and whilst they searched for the doctor my wife, in great distress, rushed into the room, and desired to know what I had done amiss that I should be treated in that manner. One of the men had threatened to shoot her at the door, but she rushed past him, and now, whilst she clung to me distracted and terrified, another would have rudely forced her away, but was rebuked by his superior,

\* A famous local character of sombre repute of whom many stories are still told.

which saved him from punishment and the party probably from the unpleasantness of a street battle with my neighbours. A crowd had collected in front of the house, and when we came out, and were proceeding down the street, there was a shout, and a piece of brick passed near the head of Mr. Nadin, who, probably apprehensive, and not without reason, of a volley, snatched a blunderbuss from one of the men, and, facing about, swore dreadfully that he would fire amongst the crowd if another stone was thrown. I turned round, and begged they would not commit any violence, for I was willing to suffer for the cause I had espoused. Either from the threat, or my wish, or both, my neighbours paused, and I was conducted to the Assheton Arms publichouse, at the lower end of the town. We stopped here some time, and I had an opportunity for observing the person of my principal captor, Mr. Nadin. He was, I should suppose, about 6 feet 1 inch in height, with an uncommon breadth and solidity of frame. He was also as well as he was strongly built; upright in gait and active in motion. His head was full sized, his complexion sallow, his hair dark and slightly grey; his features were broad and non-intellectual, his voice loud, his language coarse and illiterate, and his manner rude and overbearing to equals or inferiors. He was represented as being exceedingly crafty in his business, and somewhat unfeeling withal; but I never heard, and certainly never knew, that he maltreated his prisoners. At times he would indulge in a little raillery with them, possibly from a reason of his own, but I never was led to suppose that he threw away a word of condolence on those occasions. He was certainly a somewhat remarkable person in uncommon times, and acting in an arduous situation. He showed, however, that he had the homely tact to take care of his own interests. He housed a good harvest whilst his sun was up, and retired to spend his evening in ease and plenty on a farm of his own within the borders of Cheshire. I shall have to recur to him frequently in the course of this work. At present such was he who, with firm step but uneasy bearing, paced the floor of the parlour at the Assheton Arms inn. His men were all about the house, and



some of them would frequently step in and communicate something to him, and orders and observations passed, which were unintelligible to me. I was seated at the further end of the room, near a table. On another table near to which he passed and repassed were a couple of blunderbusses and some pistols, and also a jug of ale and some glasses, one of which he filled and gave to me. "Yor a set o' roof devils," he said, "i' this Middleton, but we mun ha' sum moor on yo' afore lung." "We are pretty fair for that," I replied, "but," looking through the window, and seeing the people collecting, "I wudno' advise yo'," I said, "to walk me eawt oth' teawn, as yo' did'n hitherto; iv yo' dun, there will be some yeds brokken." "Dunno' consarn thesel' obeawt that," he replied with a knowing look; "theaw'l see heaw ween orthert that, afore long," and whilst we talked a coach, escorted by a party of dragoons drove up to the door; I was handed in, with Mr. Nadin and one of his men, and we drove at a rapid pace towards Chadderton, I chanting to myself—

"Farewell! ye honey-winged gales;  
Farewell! ye sloping hills and dales;  
Ye waving woods that sweep the sky;  
Ye daisy'd meadows that lowly lie.  
No more to pluck your sweets I rove,  
My fond arm locked round my love;  
I now must bid a long adieu,  
To Midia's lonely bowers and you."

On arriving at the "Red Rose" at Chadderton the coach stopped, and some of the men having entered the house, returned and informed Mr. Nadin that "he was not at home, but his wife expected him soon, as he was only gone to Manchester." This was one of the houses at which private meetings had been held, and the person alluded to was Mr. Edward O'Connor, who, for having unwittingly permitted such a meeting, was involved in this affair, as will shortly appear. On the road towards Chadderton Hall I advised my conductor to draw up and return to Manchester, assuring him he would not capture any more of my batch that day,

and in confirmation I pointed to Chadderton Heights and the neighbouring country, over which scores of people were running like hunters, as if to meet the coach near Royton. All the country was up, I said, and every one whom he might want would be apprised of his coming. He growled a deep oath, saying he had never seen anything like that before; the officer commanding the dragoons, who rode by the coach door, observed that he had seen something like it in Ireland, but never anywhere else.

Passing Street-bridge and Rowley, we entered the village of Royton, the streets of which were deserted, and the doors shut. We soon returned to Rowley, and the constables made a dash into a house in search of a man named Mellor, but he was not there. A crowd was collected near the carriage, and as I was expecting to move on, the door was suddenly opened, and a long, thin, barrel of a human body was thrust into the coach, head first—a couple of stilt-like legs being doubled up after it. “Lock ’em together,” said Mr. Nadin, and it was no sooner said than done. This person had met some of the runners in a back court or alley, and threatened to beat in their brains with a walling hammer which he had in his hand.

George Howarth, for that was the name of my new companion, was a decent, labouring, married man of Royton, and was about 6 feet 4 inches in height. He said he thought it a very hard case—“he cudno’ tell wot he’d dun amiss.” Mr. Nadin said he’d know “wot he’d done amiss” before he was much older.

“Why, bless your life Mesthur Nadin,” said George, “yore a graidly felley for owt ’at I kno’ to th’ contrary, an’ I never sed nowt ogen yo’ i’ my lyve.”

“Aye, an’ I’ll make thee into a graidly felley too afore I ha’ dun wi’ the. Theaw’rt a moderate length to be begin wi’, but theaw’ll be lunger afore theaw comes back to Reighton; ween ha’ thee hang’d,” said our keeper.

“Nay, Mesthur Nadin,” said George, “dunno’ say so; they axt wot I had i’ mi’ hont, an’ I shode ’em; it wur nobbut a bit ov a walling hommer ’at I’d bin a-borroin’.”

“Aye,” said Mr. Nadin, “an’ theaw sed theawd knock

their brains eawt wi' it. But ween larn thee, an' o' yo' Jacobins, heaw yo' threaten to kill th' King's officers; theaw'll be hang'd as sure as theaw sits theer." George seemed thoughtful upon this. He looked at the shackles and at me, and soon after we drew up at the Spread Eagle publichouse, in Manchester Street, Oldham.

The soldiers were here regaled with bread, cheese, and ale. The street was filled with a great concourse of people, and some of the military kept guard whilst the others refreshed. George and I were seated on a form at the back of the room, the policemen took other seats, and Mr. Nadin and the officer placed themselves at a table, on which were set forth some nice ham, and bread and cheese, and a flagon or two of ale. They had all cut and drank, and helped themselves without ceremony; and, observing George give a most wolfish look towards the victuals, I asked him if he would like some? Had he not breakfasted? He said he had not; he was just going to breakfast when he happened to call for that unlucky walling hammer.

"Captain," I said, addressing the officer of dragoons, "are your prisoners to remain without food?"

"Oh, certainly not," he replied; "come up and take what you choose." George and I then advanced, and each got a decent wedge of cheese with bread to it, and a quart of ale was also set before us.

It would have created an appetite in a satiated alderman had he seen, as I did, the heathful gusto with which my companion disposed of huge and sundry uncut lumps of bread and cheese; his nether jaw paused not, except when he sucked down a stream of ale, after which it churned again as vigorously as that of a wild boar. I too paid no small compliment to the savoury viands, but was a small epicure beside my companion, who never ceased until both our rations were devoured, after which he finished with the last draught of ale, and soon after the whole party set off towards Manchester.

The coach stopped at Hollinwood, whilst search was made for a man named Wilson, who, however, was not captured. George and I were left in the coach alone, but guarded, and

I took the opportunity to dispel any concern he might entertain on the subject of hanging, telling him, if there was any preference in that line, I should obtain the favour before him.

A stream of people followed the coach and dragoons through the streets of Manchester, and on approaching the Exchange, down Market Street, the "Merchant Princes" crowded the steps, and welcomed the poor captain with loud huzzas!



## CHAPTER XIII.

THE BRIDGE OF TEARS—THE TRIBULATORY—A GROUP—A  
DUNGEON—AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE—NEW COMRADES.

READER! Hath it ever been thy fortune, or misfortune, to pass from Bridge Street, in Manchester, to New Bailey Street, in Salford? Hath business, or pleasure, or curiosity, or charity towards an afflicted prisoner, or mercy, or a yearning love for some of thine own in trouble, or interest, or duty, ever led thee that way? If so, thou hast passed a very plain bridge, with high parapets of a dull red stone, and spanning, with two arches, a rather broad stream, which here flows turbid, black, and deep betwixt the said towns. That, reader, is "The Bridge of Tears." Venice hath her "Bridge of Sighs," Manchester its "Bridge of Tears," and this is it.

How many hundreds of human beings have crossed this bridge, conscious they were never to return? What strings of victims have been dragged over it?—some in the serenity of innocence, some in the consciousness of habitual guilt, and others in a bowed and contrite spirit, but each followed by weeping friends, who still loved, when all the world besides was hostile or indifferent to their fate! Aye, times have been when life was paltered to petty law, and the gallows was rigged for a fraud on a bank, or a theft from a warehouse, or a potato scramble, when children were perishing at home for want of food.

And now a sad spectacle occurs to my recollection. It was a fine sunny forenoon, and the church bells were tolling funereally, and Bridge Street was so crowded that you might have walked on human heads. All eyes were turned towards this Bridge of Tears, and what came there? Ah! men on horseback, with scarlet liveries and white wands, and trumpeters

richly invested, who sent forth a note of wail that might have won pity from a heart of stone. Next came halberdiers and javelin men, and then a horseman of lofty but gentle bearing, who, as he rode, turned and cast a kind look towards one who followed, sitting high in a chair of shame placed in a cart. And who is he? that youth so heart-broken and hopeless, that draws tears from all eyes, at whose approach all heads are bared, all expressions are hushed, save sobs and prayers? For though he was but "a poor Irish lad," they said "he was very comely," and "it was a great pity," and "hard that he could not be spared," and then, "might God support and comfort him!" High he sat, with his back to the horses, his whole person exposed, his feet and well-formed limbs being incased in white trousers, stockings, and pumps, as if he were going to a bridal. His vest also was light coloured, and a short jacket displayed his square and elegant bust; his shirt was open at the collar, and his brown hair was parted gracefully on his forehead, and hung upon his shoulders. Despair and grief beyond utterance were stamped on his countenance. He seemed faint at times, and his colour changed, and he tasted an orange, listening anon to the consolations of religion. Tears would gush down his cheeks, and as he stooped to wipe them with his handkerchief he was somewhat withheld by the cords which bound him to that seat of shame. A coffin, a ladder, and a rope were in the cart below him, whilst by its side walked a dogged-looking fellow, whose eyes were perhaps the only ones unmoistened that day. This was indeed a passage of tears, and a day of sadness, and of contemplation on the mysteries of life and death, with the consoling at last that now "his troubles were ended," and "all tears were wiped from his eyes."

Such was the spectacle of that "poor Irish lad," George Russel, who was hanged on Newton Heath, for—stealing a piece of fustian, or, as the old ballad had it—

"To rob the croft  
I did intend,  
Of Master Sharrock's,  
At Mill-gate end."

Far be it from my wish, friend reader, to palliate wrong of any degree; but let us hope, and, if necessary, entreat that all waste of life like this may have now passed for ever from England; that all useless inflictions may be ameliorated; and that henceforth Justice may be enthroned with Equity and Mercy, for without these she is but a sanguinary executioner.

Now, reader, what do we next approach? A building of sombre appearance, with flanking towers and shot-holes, and iron spikes jutting above high walls, and ponderous black fetters hung above the barred window and grated portal. That, reader, is the Golgotha, the living sepulchre of those victims I have described. It is commonly called "The New Bailey,"\* but that being a term of obsolete meaning, I shall take the freedom to coin an expressive one, and call it "The Tribulatory."

The coach drove up to these cage-looking gates; the people by hundreds were trodden back by the dragoons; the gates flew open, as if saying, "Come! Come!" to victims for a feast, and I and George entered, and were immediately conducted into an interior courtyard, where a number of gentlemen and several military officers stood to receive us, and my fellow-prisoner being taken away, I was left in the midst of a circle formed by these new observers. The late Rev. W. R. Hay and the late Mr. Norris, both magistrates, were there. The late Colonel Teasdale, of the First Dragoon Guards, then a major, I believe, scanned me from top to toe; and, perhaps, piqued at my cool reserve, a young officer of the same regiment, very laddish, and with limbs long enough for windmill arms, stepped a foot, and said, "You look very fierce this morning," to which I quietly replied, "'Tis well *you* cannot." A person, whom I took to be the Boroughreeve of Manchester for the time, uttered a small impertinence, which I answered by a look; and Messrs. Hay and Norris coming up, the former, after a civil recognition, told me that I was arrested on suspi-

\* The gaol no longer exists. The latest incident in its history was the execution of the "Manchester Martyrs" in 1867 for the murder of Constable Brett.



cion of high treason, and would be immediately sent to London for examination by the Secretary of State, under whose warrant I was a prisoner. I thanked the magistrates for their information, and said I was willing to be examined anywhere, but not having a change of linen, could I not write to my wife for some? Mr. Hay said I might, and they would take care it was sent, but I must leave the letter unsealed, as it must be examined before it was forwarded, and when the things arrived there they would give instructions to have them transmitted to London. With this arrangement I was satisfied, and thanked the magistrates for their kindness. I bowed to them, and was conducted into the governor's office, where I wrote home to the above effect, and also encouraged my wife and child to be of good cheer, for I was unconscious of any crime, and hoped soon to be with them again. A turnkey then led me up a winding stone stair, very clean, and sanded with white sand; at the top was a long arched gallery, also well limed and clean, and here, opening a strong nailed door, he motioned me to step inside, which I did, when, swinging the door to with a bang that sounded through the corridor, he turned the key, and I was left alone.

My cell was the first on the second floor, on the left side of the governor's office, and I thought they had shut me in there to have a quick eye and ear upon me. The dungeon was as compact as if cut from solid rock, and the floors and wall, like all that I had seen, were unexceptionable with regard to cleanliness. It was of an oblong form, probably about nine feet in length, by five in width; the door was at one end, and a window of a half circle in form was at the other; it was unglazed, but by a careful forethought against any accidental tumbling out, by sleep walkers or others, it was provided with a cross net work of massy iron bars. There were also a couple of wooden shutters inside, which the occupant might close when he had no wish for the free winds to come with their visits of mock condolment, or to catch a glimpse of the moon and her glorious children, to remind him of some one at home and her clustering brood around her. On each side of the cell, close to the wall, stood a narrow bed on cross legs, and beneath the



window was a stone ledge, which might serve for a seat, or a step to get up to the window shutters.

I had been in this place some time, and was pacing backwards and forwards to preserve warmth, when a noise in the yard excited my curiosity, and getting up to the iron bars of the window, I was astonished and concerned on beholding there my neighbour, the doctor, stalking, or rather staggering along the flags below, with all the dignity he could assume. With his hands resting upon his hips, his legs extended to a straddle, and an air of authority, he shouted to some persons who were laughing at him—"Bring me that bundle, I say; I am a reformer, and such will I live and die. My name is Dr. Healey, and I will never flinch, so help me God! I say, bring hither that bundle." I could not contain any longer; flinging myself on one of the beds I gave way to a hearty burst of laughter, and soon afterwards heard them conduct his majesty into one of the lock-ups.

I now expected every moment being called out for my journey, and began to wish it, as I had become very cold. Four o'clock arrived, and I heard the turnkeys locking the prisoners in their cells for the night; and, soon after, four young lads were put into the cell in which I was. They asked me what I was there for; and having satisfied them, they showed not any reservations in letting me know they had each been convicted of felony. They were good-tempered lads, and appeared to be naturally well disposed; one of them gave up his share of bed to me, for which I divided amongst them my supper of bread and cheese; and after having sung a number of flash songs, and exchanged inquiries with their acquaintance in other cells, they betook themselves to repose, and I did the same as well as my situation and excited mind permitted.

## CHAPTER XIV.

COMPANIONS FOR A JOURNEY—COMFORTABLE EQUIPMENTS—  
HOW THE DOCTOR HAD BEEN OVERTAKEN AND CAPTURED  
—STOCKPORT—DISLEY—DERBY—LEICESTER.

AT five o'clock on Sunday morning I heard the welcome rattling of keys, and soon after I was taken into the yard, where to my surprise I found, besides Healey, John Lancashire, a weaver, from Middleton; Joseph Sellers, a cutler and grinder, from Manchester; Nathan Hulton, a bleacher, I think, from New Mills, in Derbyshire; John Roberts, a cooper, from Manchester; Robert Ridings, a weaver, from Failsworth; and Edward O'Connor, publican, of the "Red Rose," at Chadderton. I had expected being conducted to London alone, and certainly was not prepared for a mix-up with these men, who I knew were part of those taken at the plot meeting at Ardwick. Being here, however, and without the power to extricate myself, I resolved to make the best of my situation, and soon recalled my wonted cheerfulness. Healey was as grim as a sweep: he had been tumbling in a dirty, smoky lock-up all night, and was now ready to perform "The Moor of Venice." I shook my head, and, in order to rouse him, said he was a fine fellow to bring himself into that place. He turned quickly, as I expected, and said, What did I think of myself? Was not I in as great a hobble as he was?—which retort turned the laugh against me as I intended, and put us all in good humour; and the doctor then went to a water-tap and washed his face.

Having been arranged in two parties, of four and four, we were heavily ironed by the legs. Mr. Nadin, who super-

intended the operation, ordered out body and neck collars, and armlets, with chains; but Mr. George Williams and Mr. Stephen Dykes, King's messengers, into whose company we were transferred, objected to the use of those irons, and they were put in the boot of the coach, which awaited us at the gates. Besides the messengers we were accompanied by Joseph Mills and James Platt, both officers of the Manchester police. The messengers then formally took us into custody in the King's name, and gave us to understand that if we conducted ourselves with propriety on the road, every indulgence would be extended to us. We assured them we would try to deserve their kindness; and, congratulating each other on our removal from a place to which, above all others, we had a dislike, we mounted the coach, and left The Tribulatory at six o'clock on the morning of Sunday, the 30th of March, 1817.

And now, whilst we traverse the dull streets, void of inhabitants, save watchmen retiring from their beats, drowsy toppers staggering home, with bleared eyes, torn clothes, and empty pockets, and here and there a sprightly maid on hands and knees, cleaning steps and door-plates, let us recur to the doctor, and give an account of his apprehension, as I had learned it from him whilst we were being ironed.

On leaving home, he took with him, besides his top-coat, a bundle of clothes, his tooth-drawing and bleeding instruments, and a Barclay's dictionary in quarto; intending to raise money on the latter, if no other means presented itself. The Middleton constables, after seeing me safely lodged at the Assheton's Arms, got a hint about the doctor, and set out after him at full speed, but without cry. The little man had stepped into a shop in Simister Lane, in hopes of selling his dictionary, which, after some time lost in conversation, was declined; and he was returning down the lane, when a woman called him into a house to draw a tooth. He gladly accepted the invitation, performed the operation cleverly, pocketed his fee, and was coming away to join me, but was too late. The constables got a view of him, and, encumbered as he was, with top-coat, bundle, and dictionary, it would have been useless

attempting to run, so he resigned himself to his fate, and was taken in great triumph to the Royal Oak publichouse, at top of Bowlee. There were about half a dozen constables and helpers ; and now, having made good their capture, they sat down, determined to enjoy themselves after their morning's exertions. A plentiful ale posset was first despatched, after which there came hot and cold ale, and, lastly, some potent glasses, many of which were paid for by farmers and others, who, knowing the doctor, came to see him, and bid him good-bye. Of all these things the doctor partook to his wish, which was not a small one according to his size ; one of the farmers also bought his dictionary, and the little man was, in a short time, as happy as a king, and for anything he seemed to know to the contrary, as potent. An hour or two were passed in jocular entertainment, the doctor spouted and sung for them as was his wont, and a verse of a fine old song, on a genial subject, made his captors almost as jovial as himself.

“I love no roast but a nut-brown toast,  
Or a crab laid on the fire ;  
But little bread will do my stead—  
Much bread I nought desire.  
No frost, no snow, no wine I trow,  
Could hurt me if it would ;  
I am so wrapp’t, and thoroughly lapp’t,  
Of this jolly good ale, and old.  
Back and side, go bare, go bare ;  
Both foot and hand go cold ;  
But belly, God send thee good ale enough,  
Whether it be new or old.”

From this last place they adjourned to the “Black Boy” in Old Millgate, where the party dined, and the doctor again went through his performances, to the great amusement of a room full of country and townspeople, who were glad to obtain admission by feeing the waiters. He was next taken to the Police Office ; his presence at which place was said to have given the chief of the police great satisfaction ; and shortly after he made his appearance at The Tribulatory, as before described.



And now let us proceed on our journey. Our appearance at Stockport, where the horses were changed, seemed to excite much interest and attention, and we learned from the observations of several of the townspeople that we were known as "The Manchester Rebels." At Disley we breakfasted; and the doctor so much enjoyed it that he said if that was being a State prisoner, he wished he had been one five years before—an expression which, coupled with the hearty compliment we all paid to the viands, probably impressed our conductors with the belief that we had been most cruelly famished ere we became prisoners. At Derby we had just got seated comfortably at dinner when our Jehu came in, whip in hand, saying, as usual, "Coach, gentlemen; coach, coach." Mr. Williams told him to go back, and when we were ready we would let him know; he seemed not to comprehend this, and showed an air, until he was bid peremptorily to walk out; the coach, he was informed, was ours, and must wait for us, and not we for it. The vehicle had been specially hired for the journey.

We had by this time so won the good opinion of the King's messengers that they did me the honour to say privately the irons should be taken off, and we should travel the remainder of the journey as common passengers, if I would give my word for the sure conveyance of the party. I said I could not do that: three of the men only were personally known to me; a fourth I knew only by name, and the others I had never seen before that morning. Besides, their conduct towards us had been so kind that I should be extremely sorry if they incurred any blame by endeavouring to render us comfortable: we could do as we were, the conveyance which carried us carried our chains also. On emerging from the courtyard into the street we found that a considerable crowd had collected, many being persons of respectable appearance. They gazed with a strong curiosity; several lent us a hand to mount; the coach dashed forward, and as we waved a farewell we received their cheers in return.

Nothing requiring notice occurred until we arrived at Leicester, where we stopped at the head inn. The landlord,

supposing probably that we were transported felons, showed us into a taproom, ejecting a number of coach cads, stable helpers, and others to make way for us. He refused to find a better room, and was impertinent and rude towards the King's messengers, until they exhibited their badges of office, informed him who and what they were, and demanded, at his peril for refusing, the best accommodation the house afforded. The master then became a most obsequious servant, showed us into a large and elegantly furnished room, and in a very short time set before us a good warm supper. The windows here looked into the street, and they were presently darkened by curious gazers, who climbed up the shutters to get a peep at us, and hung to one another like bees swarming about a hive. Before we left this house we were each presented with a nightcap; and on remounting the coach several gentlemen, whom we understood to be magistrates, handed us a glass of wine each, with which we drank their good healths and drove off.

## CHAPTER XV.

A NIGHT JOURNEY: ITS OBJECTS AND REMINISCENCES—MUSIC  
AND POETRY — REDBURN — CHATTERTON — LONDON — BOW  
STREET.

THE night was gleamy and starlight; and as the coach dashed forward we soon entered upon what seemed a pretty rural country. Now we passed a large substantial-looking farm house, with its homestead; now a loving couple were overtaken walking arm in arm by some deep and bowered lane; next the mirth of home-wending youths would be heard; or mayhap the strains of a devout hymn from some chapel-comers. Anon a white cottage would lend us a blink from its cheerful hearth. Ah! what a paradise seems the lowliest shed when viewed from the vista of a prison door, how enviable appear the humblest mortals that walk abroad of their own free will, and what a dove-nest is that where a fair hand is seen closing the white chamber curtains for the night! Yes, it is at such moments, and under impressions produced by such objects, that we can best appreciate the blessings of the poorest hearth, of the humblest home, in which, as I have before intimated, if there be contentment, happiness will surely abide. Wise indeed is he, and wealthy beyond all riches, who enjoys with a thankful heart the blessings, few though they be, which he finds bestowed on his humble estate; remembering gratefully that "better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." But we seldom find out these things until it be too late: we count not our jewels perhaps until the dearest are lost.

Our party of four was now inside the coach, and we began to sing. Ridings, who understood music, gave one or two pieces with a pathos and solemnity which I never heard expressed before.

“Glory to thee, my God, this night,”

brought the singing parties of our own homes to our recollection; and we all participated in the emotions of our amiable and talented musician. O'Connor sometimes laughed, sometimes cried like a child; at last he broke out into that mournful lament—

“Where is my cabin-door fast by the wild wood?  
Sisters and sire, did ye weep for its fall?  
Where is the mother that look'd on my childhood?  
And where is my bosom-friend, dearer than all?  
Oh! my sad soul, long abandon'd by pleasure,  
Why didst thou dote on a fast-fading treasure?  
Tears, like the rain-drop, may fall without measure,  
But rapture and beauty they cannot recall.”

To which we all responded as chorus—

“Where is my cabin-door, fast by the wild wood?”

Morning at length broke, and as we approached the dark woods and green meadows of Woburn, I gave my

#### SERENADE.

The grey dawn of morning is spreading on high;  
And Venus is glowing so bright in the sky;  
The cattle are lowing, the tender lambs bleat;  
Arise, dearest Mary, before it be late.

The sweet-scented blossom is cover'd with dew;  
The flowers of the field are perfumed anew;  
The blithe birds are singing on ev'ry green tree;  
Arise, dearest Mary, and come unto me.

Thy breath is more sweet than the breeze of the morn;  
The lily's pure white doth thy bosom adorn;  
Thy look is as bright as the beaming of day;  
Oh! come dearest maid, to thy true love away.



Lancashire also sung a sweet and simple melody to words somewhat like the following :

“ I wonder why my love is cold,  
    Whilst I so kind would be ?  
I would give hoards of countless gold,  
    To win thine heart from thee.  
To win thy love, my beauteous maid,  
    And find it ever true :  
One thousand jewels, too, were thine,  
    That flash like sun-bright dew.”

We breakfasted at Redburn, a small village, which takes its name from a clear, sedgy stream, immortalised by the unfortunate Chatterton, and said, with much probability of truth, to have been reddened with blood at the great battle of St. Albans.

At this place we breakfasted, washed, and made ourselves as decent as we could, preparatory to our entrance into London. O'Connor's legs were swelled, and the chains gave him much pain. A few miles short of London the coach stopped at a road-side publichouse, where, whilst taking a little porter, my companions had an opportunity for conferring, without the immediate presence of our conductors. I then found they were afraid of each other, and that they expected nothing less than a trial, and a conviction on the evidence of some one or two of the party. I endeavoured to unite them, and persuaded them to say as little as possible when examined by the Secretary of State ; and at length they agreed to say, that the meetings they had attended were to raise subscriptions for the families of prisoners, and of those who had left the country in consequence of the Suspension Act. This they were to admit and abide by ; and each pledged himself to be faithful to the agreement, and then we all went on again with confidence and satisfaction.

We arrived in London about twelve o'clock, and were immediately conveyed to Bow Street, which was filled with people before we could be got off the coach. We were placed in a decent room our irons were immediately removed, and

most of us wrote home to our families. A gentleman named Capper was introduced, and I thought he seemed to scrutinise us very much. Sir Nathaniel Conant, an elderly and respectable looking gentleman, also came in, and informed us that Lord Sidmouth could not see us that day, and that we should be well provided for at a house in the neighbourhood. Soon afterwards we were conducted in couples to a room prepared at the Brown Bear publichouse, opposite; where, after supper, the doctor amused ourselves and keepers (who were eight or ten police officers) with several recitations in his most florid style. Messrs. Williams and Dykes came and brought with them a friend, and they each seemed much entertained. Mr. Perry, one of the chief officers at Bow Street, afterwards entered, and apologised for having to submit us to what might be a small inconvenience. It was customary, he said, to secure prisoners during the night by a chain, and he hoped we should take it as a mere matter of form; we expressed our readiness to submit to whatever restraint might be deemed necessary. Small chains being produced, myself, Lancashire, and Healey were fastened together, and the other five were in like manner secured, after which we continued our amusements during an hour or two, and then went to rest on beds in the same room, still secured by chains to the bedposts, and to each other.

On the following morning our kind conductors, the messengers, again came to see us, and furnished some of the party with clean linen; other articles of dress were not withheld to such as wanted them most. John Lancashire and the doctor were completely changed in appearance, and came forth dapper, smart young fellows. To all, except myself and O'Connor, something was furnished: we were probably excepted, not because our apparel was better than that of the others, but because it was in a more careful condition, and we had also put on clean linen before we left home. The kindness of Messrs. Williams and Dykes made, I am sure, a strongly grateful impression on the minds of the whole of their prisoners; and I may also add that the demeanour of the Bow Street officers was, without exception, such as might be

expected from men who knew their duty, and had the full power to perform it. It presented a striking contrast to the conduct which was at that time generally practised by men of the same station at Manchester.

## CHAPTER XVI.

THE PRIVY COUNCIL—LORD SIDMOUTH—SIR SAMUEL SHEPHERD  
—LORD CASTLEREAGH—ANECDOTE OF THE DOCTOR—COLD-  
BATH FIELDS PRISON—THE UNION HYMN—CONTENTMENT  
NOT INCOMPATIBLE WITH PATRIOTISM—MORAL.

ABOUT four o'clock in the afternoon we were conveyed in four coaches to the Secretary of State's office at Whitehall. On our arrival we were divided into two parties of four and four, and each party was placed in a separate room. A gentleman now appeared, who asked severally our names and occupations, which he wrote in a book, and then retired. In a short time another person came and called my name, and I rose and followed him along a darkish passage. I must confess that this part of the proceedings gave rise to some feelings of incertitude and curiosity, and brought to my recollection some matters which I had read when a boy about the Inquisition in Spain. My conductor knocked at a door and was told to go in, which he did, and delivered me to an elderly gentleman, whom I recognised as Sir Nathaniel Conant. He asked my christian and surname, which were given : he then advanced to another door, and desiring me to follow him, he opened it, and, bowing to a number of gentlemen seated at a long table covered with green cloth, he repeated my name and took his place near my left hand. The room was a large one, and grandly furnished, according to my notions of such matters. Two large windows, with green blinds and rich curtains, opened upon a richer curtain of nature—some trees, which were in beautiful leaf. The chimney-piece was of carved marble, and on the table were many books; and several



persons sat there assiduously writing, whilst others fixed attentive looks upon me. I was motioned to advance to the bottom of the table, and did so: and the gentleman who sat at the head of the table said I was brought there by virtue of a warrant issued by him in consequence of my being suspected of high treason; that I should not be examined at that time, but must be committed to close confinement until that day se'nnight, when I should again be brought up for examination. Meantime, if I had anything to say on my own behalf, or any request to make, I was at liberty to do so; but I must observe they did not require me to say anything.

The person who addressed me was a tall, square, and bony figure, upwards of fifty years of age, I should suppose, and with thin and rather grey hair; his forehead was broad and prominent, and from their cavernous orbits looked mild and intelligent eyes. His manner was affable, and much more encouraging to freedom of speech than I had expected. On his left sat a gentleman whom I never made out; and next him again was Sir Samuel Shepherd, the Attorney-General, I think, for the time, who frequently made use of an ear trumpet. On Lord Sidmouth's right, for such was the gentleman who had been speaking to me, sat a good-looking person in a plum-coloured coat, with a gold ring on the small finger of his left hand, on which he sometimes leaned his head as he eyed me over—this was Lord Castlereagh.

"My lord," I said, addressing the president, "having been brought from home without a change of linen, I wish to be informed how I shall be provided for in that respect until I can be supplied from home?" The Council conferred a short time, and Lord Sidmouth said I should be supplied with whatever was necessary. I next asked, should I be allowed freely to correspond with my wife and child, inform them of my situation, and to receive their letters, provided such letters did not contain political information?

"You will be allowed to communicate with your family," said his lordship; "but I trust you will see the necessity of confining yourself to matters of a domestic nature. You will always write in the presence of a person who will examine

your letters; you will, therefore, do well to be guarded in your correspondence, as nothing of an improper tendency will be suffered to pass. I speak this for your own good."

"Could I be permitted to have pen, ink, and paper in prison?" I asked; "and could I be allowed to keep a small day-book, or journal, for my amusement?"

"It is an indulgence," was the reply, "which has never been granted to any State prisoner; and as I do not see any reason for departing from the established rule, I should feel it my painful duty to refuse it."

I said I had heard that the Suspension Act contained a clause securing to State prisoners the right of sending petitions to Parliament; and I wished to be informed if there were such a clause.

His lordship said the Suspension Act did not contain any such clause, but the power to petition would be allowed by his Majesty's ministers, and I should have that liberty whenever I thought proper to use it. I bowed and retired.

The other prisoners were then severally called in and informed of the cause of their arrest, in the same terms that I had been; and that they would be again examined on that day se'nnight. All of them afterwards declared they had not made any statement or disclosure of any description; but that, according to the agreement mentioned, they had remained silent as to the purpose of their meetings. One characteristic incident was, however, said to have occurred before the Privy Council. On the doctor being asked how he spelled his surname, he answered in broad Lancashire, "Haitch, hay, haa, l, hay, y" (H, e, a, l, e, y), but the pronunciation of the e and a being different in London, there was some boggling about reducing the name to writing, and a pen and paper were handed to him. The doctor knew that his *forte* lay not in feats of penmanship any more than in spelling; and to obviate any small embarrassment on that account, he pulled out an old pocket-book, and took from it one of his prescription labels, on which the figures of a pestle and mortar were imposed from a rudely engraved plate, and these words, "Joseph Healey, Surgeon, Middleton. Plase take —— tablespoonfuls of this

mixture each —— hours.” This he handed to Lord Sidmouth, who, as may be supposed, received it graciously, looked it carefully over, smiled, and read it again, and passed it round the Council table. Presently they were all tittering, and the doctor stood quite delighted at finding them such a set of merry gentlemen. The fact was, the first blank had been originally filled with a figure of two, “Plase take 2 table-spoonfuls,” &c., but some mischievous wag had inserted two ciphers after the figure, and made it read “200 tablespoonfuls of this mixture each two hours.” However it was, the doctor certainly imbibed a favourable opinion of the Council. The circumstance was supposed to have transpired from his own lips ; and I certainly had seen such a card in his possession before he went to London, but I never saw it afterwards.

In the same vehicle which brought us to the Home Office, we were next taken to the prison at Coldbath Fields, and placed in the inner lodge until a ward could be got ready for our occupation. O’Connor, who was unwell, and whose legs were swollen and painful from the gout and his chains, was taken from us and put into a sick ward, as was also Robert Ridings, who was likewise in delicate health, and who, being already incipiently consumptive, died soon after his return, from colds, as he thought, taken during his journey homewards.

Whilst we were in the lodge, Evans the younger, one of the London reformers—who, as well as his father, was confined in this prison under the Suspension Act—came to the gate to speak with a friend. Samuel Drummond also, who has been mentioned as being apprehended at the Blanket meeting, was walking in a courtyard, seemingly in good health and spirits.

When our place was ready a turnkey conducted the six of us who remained together through a number of winding passages to a flagged yard, into which opened a good room, or cell, about ten yards in length and three in width. On each side of the room were three beds, placed in what might be termed wooden troughs ; at the head of the room a good fire was burning, and we found a stock of coal and wood to recruit it at our pleasure. There were also a number of chairs, a

table, candles, and other requisites; so that, had it not been for the grating at the window above the door, and the arched roof, bound by strong bars of iron, we might have fancied ourselves to be in a comfortable barrack. After surveying the place thoroughly, and striking the walls to ascertain if they were hollow, we stirred up the fire, drew our seats to the hearth, and spent the evening in conversing about our families and friends until the hour of rest, when we concluded by singing "The Union Hymn," which I led for that purpose.

## THE UNION HYMN.

YE bards of Britain, strike the lyre,  
And sing the happy union;  
In strains of patriotic fire,  
Oh! sing the happy union;  
Not distant is the welcome day,  
When woe, and want, and tyranny,  
Shall from our isle be swept away:  
The grand epoch of liberty  
Awaits a faithful union.

Oh! worthy is the glorious cause,  
Ye patriots of the union;  
Our fathers' rights, our fathers' laws,  
Await a faithful union.  
A crouching dastard sure is he  
Who would not strive for liberty,  
And die to make Old England free  
From all her load of tyranny;  
Up! brave men of the union.

Our little ones shall learn to bless  
Their fathers of the union.  
And every mother shall caress  
Her hero of the union.  
Our plains with plenty shall be crown'd;  
The sword shall till the fruitful ground;  
The spear shall prune our trees around;  
And joy shall everywhere abound,  
To bless a nation's union.



Then Britain's prince shall truly reign ;  
His subjects will defend him ;  
And, freed from loath'd corruption's train,  
Bright honour shall attend him.  
Whilst foreign despots evermore  
Shall venerate Old Albion's shore ;  
And war, with all its crime and gore,  
Forgotten, and for ever o'er ;  
Shall crown a nation's union.

And now, whilst my fellow prisoners are sleeping—some probably agonised by visions of the scaffold and block, others again winging their souls homeward in sweet dreams—let us, my reader, discuss the spirit of the foregone hymn. If thou sayest it is inconsistent with the advice to contentment which I have already given, I reply that a spirit of humble satisfaction with the good things a man hath, a full appreciation of the blessings he enjoys, is not by any means incompatible with fair means and honourable wishes for the obtainment of other good things which he hath not. That there is a time and a means for all rightfully obtainable things, and that the industrious and patient man will sooner arrive at his ends by a beaten and legalised path, though he advances slowly, than will he who, breaking down all barriers, is himself broken down, as he must be, unless the nation become his pioneer ;—that the industrious and poor man best serves his country by doing his duty to his family at home ;—that he best amends his country by giving it good children, and, if he have not any, by setting a good example himself ;—that he best governs by obeying the laws, and by ruling in love and mercy his own little kingdom at home ;—that his best reform is that which corrects irregularities on his own hearth ;—that his best meetings are those with his own family by his own fireside ;—that his best resolutions are those which he carries into effect for his own amendment and that of his household ;—that his best speeches are those which promote “ Peace on earth, and goodwill ” towards mankind ;—that his best petitions are those of a contrite heart, addressed to the King of Heaven, by whom they will not be despised, and those to the governors of the

earth for the peaceable obtainments of ameliorations for his brother man; and that his best means for such obtainment is the cultivation of good feelings in the hearts and of good sense in the heads of those around him;—that his best riches is contentment;—that his best love is that which comforts his family;—that his best instruction is that which humanises and ennobles their hearts; and that his best religion is that which leads him to “Do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God.” Would he triumph? let him learn to endure. Would he be a hero? let him subdue himself. Would he govern? let him first obey.

Should my reader, as I may almost expect, especially if he be a young and sanguine politician, feel as if I were presuming too much, let me remind him that at the time I am writing of I was in my thirtieth year, at my present writing in my fifty-third (well and hearty and free of wind and limb, thank God). He may then perhaps allow that a close and somewhat severe experience of twenty-five years (say from 1815) entitles a man to have an opinion of his own, and to express it; if not, he has lived to very little purpose, either for himself or his fellow-beings. May I not then say, in the language of the wise king of Israel, “Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honour when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.”

## CHAPTER XVII.

### DESCRIPTION OF OUR PRISON—OUR FARE—OUR NEXT NEIGHBOURS—OTHER MATTERS.

ON the morning following we were aroused from sleep by a loud report of firearms, and soon afterwards the door of our room was opened, and a turnkey saluted us with a "good morning" and a "hope that we had slept well"; we thanked him, assured him we had, and he left us. We now rose and put the place in order, washed ourselves, and took a survey of our department and its premises. The door opened into a flagged yard, about twelve yards in length, by nine in width, and to which we descended by a couple of steps. On the right and the front of the door the yard was bounded by high and strong palisades, beyond which was a large garden, bounded again by a lofty wall, above which we could see upper windows of buildings. On our left we were separated from another yard by a wall about nine feet high; abutting upon it were a sewer, a water tap, and other conveniences. A door was fixed in one corner of the wall, and near it was a second door, which led into the passages of the prison, whilst above our heads and along our front appeared the windows, strongly barred, of numerous cells, and the thoroughfares communicating with them. Such was our position in this place, on viewing which as a prison we saw nothing to complain about.

At breakfast time the turnkey again made his appearance, with another man, who took from a basket six loaves of bread of nearly a pound each, a pipkin containing two pounds of butter, a jar with two pounds of sugar, a canister with one pound of tea, six cups and basins, salt, plates, dishes, half a

dozen knives and forks, a kettle, a pan, and other articles to complete a kitchen service, to which were added a wash-basin, soap, and clean towel, so that we began to look a little homely, and soon having the kettle boiling, we sat down to a comfortable cup of tea, wishing that those at home, and all others who deserved it, might have as good a breakfast as ourselves. At noon we dined on a quarter of pork, with potatoes and other vegetables, to dilute which each man was allowed a pot of porter, and pipes and tobacco were added. Our supper was tea and cold meat, and thus, so far as diet was concerned, we lived more like gentlemen than prisoners. I recollect, however, one of the party shaking his head at what appeared to us profusion, and observing that he did not think any better of his own case for all that; "for," said he, "it's always the way here; when they intend to hang 'em, they let 'em have whatever they choose to eat or drink—only they *will* hang 'em at last." This remark made an impression on some of my companions, and most of them seemed to be of opinion that all this kindness would prove only precursory to some terrible act of severity; and the idea was strengthened when, a few days after, on some of us requesting to have books to read, a Bible, a prayer-book, some tracts, and "sermons for persons under sentence of death" were put into our hands.

But long before this one of our men had made a most interesting discovery. He came in with surprise and joy in his countenance, and said "There were women in the next yard." Another followed saying there were women indeed! The question was asked, what sort? and we all ran to ascertain that point according to our several tastes. The oldest man amongst us was speaking to one of them through the keyhole, and he had already commenced a negotiation for a kind of "friendly compact," which was soon agreed upon and ratified by both parties, by mutual congratulations and good wishes expressed through the keyhole. They were, if I recollect aright, just the same number of women as we were of men—six, and they readily undertook to assist us in every possible way within their power. They were to wash and darn whatever small articles we had that required it, and to do all our



needlework generally, besides which they were to obtain and transmit to us all the information they could respecting ourselves, and to be faithful and secret in their communications. They vowed, indeed, to be true friends, and we never had cause to doubt their word. On our part we promised to keep faithfully their secret information, and to render them whatever services lay in our power, and we also kept our compact. The signal when either party was wanted was to throw a piece of blue slate (of which several pieces lay in the yard) over the wall, when the other party was to repair to the keyhole and receive the communication. Poor things! tears came into their eyes when we spoke to them in words of confidence and kindness, and they wept bitterly when we touched, as we were almost compelled to do, a more tender chord—when we asked about their former condition in life, and inquired respecting their fathers and mothers, their husbands or their children. Some of our men almost promised to love them (a word of strange power over the heart of woman), and we could see a faint, hopeless smile when the head was turned aside, as if to look back on some recollections of former days.

One alone was of matronly age; the others varied, I should think, from twenty to thirty. Two had infants at the breast, and all of them were widows or married women. Two had lost their husbands, who were officers, in the service of their country, and the husband of a third, also in a military capacity, was absent on a foreign station. One or two had been seduced and deserted, and more than that number had disgusted their connections by becoming intemperate, after which they descended to poverty, crime, and disgrace. All had been condemned to death, or to long terms of transportation, and they severally acknowledged that they narrowly escaped the fulfilment of their sentence only by urgent and powerful interest of most respectable connections. None of them were less than good-looking; some were more than that, and two were remarkably fine women, for we could see their form and stature as they paced the yard at a distance from the door. One of the young ones was a little dimpled, cherry-looking thing, but the melancholy of her eye was strangely at variance

with the rosy health of her cheek. One of them would tell of her poor old father in the country—of his ancient mansion, and the servants he had around him ; another thanked God that her mother had, by death, escaped the affliction of seeing her disgrace ; and another would talk of what her husband (her Henry, I think she called him) would do when he came home—how he would, after all, forgive her, “ knowing it was distress,” and get her liberated, and how they would be happy again, and she virtuous and ever affectionate. Poor things ! with such bright hopes and illusions they would amuse themselves, and they seemed consoled when we talked with them of such matters, and thereby helped them to relief by floods of tears.

We too had our illusions—our thoughts of home, and our hopes, as well as our fears. But our case at present wore a worse aspect than theirs ; their periods of imprisonment were definite, and some of them soon to expire, whilst ours were all uncertainty. They knew the worst ; we knew nothing, save that we were in the power of those we had made our enemies. Besides, they shook their heads and sighed when we talked about going home soon and leaving them. They had heard us termed “ the Lancashire rebels,” and that we were to be tried for high treason, and the case was expected to go hard against us.

I may, perhaps I ought to say that their demeanour justified us in crediting their account of themselves. They were very friendly, but nothing more ; they never, so far as I could learn, gave encouragement to improper freedom of speech ; nor do I believe that any of our men greatly offended in that respect.

After our first dinner we had a decent surplus of meat and vegetables left. One asked, “ What shall be done with these ? ” another said, “ It would never do to send them back ; if we did we should have so much less the day following.” “ Cut it up for the women,” said a third, and it was done : and we made them up as nice a little dinner as we could. The meat, excellent pork, was reduced to slices, and put on a flat dish ; the vegetables and bread, and all our other little trifles, were

similarly disposed on another dish. The slate, the ever welcome messenger, was then thrown over the wall, and they were presently at the door. "Will you do us another favour?" asked our spokesman. "With pleasure," was the reply. "Look down then, and accept a trifle from our table." A space below the door admitted this. There was a scream of delight, and a "hush, hush," and the dishes were hurried away, emptied, washed, and returned in like manner, with ten thousand thanks for our remembrance of them. How, indeed, could we have forgotten them, the poor, lost, cut-off, and world-despised beings? After tea we did the same; we gave them plentifully of our stock—our tea, our sugar, our butter—bread they had. They told us they secreted our gifts until they were locked up in their house and the turnkeys had retired for the night, when they set on a pan, brought their stores from their hiding-place, and had a feast that might have comforted a queen.

The day following we did the same, and continued it. We cut them up the remainder of a leg of mutton, weighing thirteen pounds and a half—with carrots, parsnips, and other condiments. They informed us that there was astonishment in the governor's kitchen when the platters with the clean bones only were returned. It was no wonder, the domestics said, "that the people of Lancashire rebelled if they were all starved, as they were sure they must have been, from the enormous quantities of meat we devoured."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE AUTHOR'S ADVICE—ADOPTED AND ACTED UPON—SECOND EXAMINATION BEFORE THE PRIVY COUNCIL—VISITATION OF THE MAGISTRATES' COMMITTEE.

AFTER we had finished our first dinner, and had got seated with our pipes and allowance of porter, we set about making regulations amongst ourselves ; the principal of which was that each was to become room's-man for the day, in turn, and, as such, servant to the others. The reader will recollect that our party now consisted of James Sellers, Joseph Healey, John Lancashire, Nathan Hulton, John Roberts, and myself. I now addressed them, saying I had a matter of some consequence to mention, and hoped they would consider it seriously, and act in their best discretion. I said they well knew that, though I had been arrested and confined with them (providentially, it almost appeared to me), I had not, at any time, been connected with their secret meetings ; and that both Lancashire and Healey could testify that I had always condemned such meetings—my maxim being, " Hold fast by the law." That, consequently, I considered myself in small jeopardy compared with themselves, unless suborned and false witnesses were brought against me, which, however, the Government could doubtless procure if it chose. I therefore viewed myself as standing on much better ground than I did them ; they having been apprehended in the act of carrying on a secret meeting for unlawful purposes. That such difference, however, now I was with them, should not prevent me from doing my best to render them a service, and with that view giving them my best advice. They should remark, I said, that,



either through the interposition of Providence, or the fatuity of the Government, they were (O'Connor and Ridings excepted, neither of whom were deeply versed in their private transactions) all together in one place. That hitherto, as I understood from their conversations, none of them had been questioned by the Privy Council ; and that consequently no admissions or declarations had been made to that body. They all solemnly declared nothing had escaped from their lips. Then I continued, " the pie-crust is yet whole, and you may keep it so." I proposed that every day after dinner they should appoint a chairman, who should put such questions to them as he considered the Privy Council were likely to do at their next examination, supposing some one of their body to have given secret information. That their replies should be deliberated upon, and determined accordingly ; and those replies should be committed to memory, and, in substance, strictly adhered to at their next interview with the ministers. That they would consequently all give the same account ; all be of one party and of one mind ; and that if Government brought them to trial, it would have to unmask its spies and informers, instead of making them fall by their mutual contradictions, mistrusts, and jealousies, which, as it seemed to me, the Government would prefer doing.

They all declared it was the best of advice, and it was adopted with acclamation. I would have retired, but they would not suffer me, and insisted that I should become their questioner. I complied at length—put them through a catechising according to my poor ability—and established a set of replies, such as I thought would either answer or ward off any question they were likely to encounter. The basis of the old tale was adopted ; their meetings were to devise relief to persons who had fled from the Suspension Act, and to their families in their absence. This was to be the skeleton ; we stuffed and padded it in our own way, and threw over it a cloak of plausibility, which we thought the devil himself could not penetrate. And so we continued day by day, catechising and drilling, until my fellows would, I believe, have stood before old Rhadamanthus without quail or fear.

We now began to be much better satisfied with ourselves and each other; those thoughtful and suspicious looks which had hitherto indicated fear and mistrust were no longer observable. Our time passed more agreeably; and, striving to amuse each other, we had no lack of songs, hymns, and love and family tales, with scraps of plots and insurrections, and droll blunders, which sometimes caused roars of laughter.

About this time we discovered we had some little attendants upon us which we were extremely desirous to get rid of; how or where we picked them up we could not tell; but every man was infested, and we made it known to our attendant, who informed the governor, Mr. Atkins. A more thorough or speedy removal could not have been effected anywhere; that worthy and humane gentleman immediately caused all our bedding to be taken out, our room to be cleansed, new and clean bedding to be supplied, all our linen to be changed, and our other clothes to be carefully examined, and we felt no more of that nuisance.

On the ninth of April we were conveyed in coaches, as before, to the Home Office, at Whitehall. But let me apprise the reader that, not having the means for writing, and not being able to commit every particular to memory, I cannot pretend to furnish a verbatim report of my examinations, and shall only give the substance of what passed on those occasions.

I was introduced to the Council with the previous formalities, and by the same person, Sir Nathaniel Conant. Lord Sidmouth repeated what he had said on my first examination—viz., that I was arrested on suspicion of high treason, and that they were willing to hear what I had to say in reply. I said I was not conscious of having deserved suspicion of treasonable practices, as, instead of being a promoter of violence and disturbance, I had always been a friend to peace and order; and, with that purpose, had used my little influence to the utmost amongst my neighbours. That if his lordship was as well acquainted with the situation of the working people as I was, and with the conduct which I had pursued amongst them, he would see the justice, as well as the policy, of re-

storing me to my family. I acknowledged I was a Parliamentary reformer, and always should be so until reform was obtained—that no circumstance or situation whatever could induce me to disavow my opinions—nay, I considered it as the pride and glory of my life to have, in some degree, merited the name of a reformer; but I never advocated its attainment by violence. That I had trusted, and endeavoured to inspire my neighbours with the like confidence, that when our grievances and sufferings were properly made known to Parliament, attention would be paid to them; that we had petitioned, but were not listened to. That I could not tell how to account for this neglect, save by crediting the existence of corruption in the honourable House; but still I would not recommend its removal by violent means. That I firmly believed reform would ultimately take place; circumstances occurring in their own due time which would induce his Majesty's ministers and Parliament to take the measure into consideration. That I had always been an enemy to private meetings—had deprecated them as much as possible, believing that reform did not require privacy; and, finally, that, in my opinion, nothing save reform could preserve the country from revolution. No questions were asked, and I was re-conducted as before.

When the other prisoners had been severally introduced, we were conveyed to our old quarters; and the day following James Sellers was taken from our party, and put, as we understood, into the deputy-governor's house.

In the course of this week we were visited by the magistrates appointed to examine the prison. I was room's-man for the day, and was stripped, with sleeves rolled up, and washing some pots which had been used at our mess when the gentlemen entered the room, preceded by Mr. Beckett, the deputy-governor of the prison. They bade us "good morning," and asked if we were comfortable. We answered in the affirmative, at which they expressed satisfaction. One of them, an elderly gentleman (Mr. Sketchly, I believe), asked Mr. Beckett, "which is Bamford?" and Mr. Beckett pointed me out. The gentleman was pleased to compliment me, and said



he understood I was a poet. I thanked him for his favourable opinion, but disclaimed being a poet; I was only a country rhymester, I said, just capable of throwing a few doggerel verses together. He asked how I received my education, as he understood I was but a poor man. I said I did not pretend to much education—my father did, however, send me to school, where I was taught to read; I first began to write at a Sunday school, kept by the Methodists, and I afterwards went to other schools; but what little information I was possessed of had been chiefly acquired by my own reading and study. He said he was sorry to see us in our present situation; it was a pity men should be so deluded. I replied that we did not consider ourselves to be deluded men. I, at any rate, did not suppose myself to be one. I had not done anything to repent of. I had not said anything that I would not repeat again under the circumstances. How was it possible, he asked, that we could be dissatisfied with the taxes. Poor people paid no taxes; how could taxation operate on them? I said, "Suppose a tax were laid upon land, or on the landlord. As his leases expired the rents of his farms were advanced to meet the tax, and the farmer was obliged, in order to meet the advance, to lay an additional charge on the produce of the farm. The shopkeeper who purchased from the farmer then advanced to his customer, and the poor man, being a customer as well as others, paid the advanced price for so much as he consumed; and that was the way in which taxation operated on the poor." To this there was no reply; and soon after our visitors took their departure.

Bad as our case was (and we supposed we should have a long imprisonment of some years at least), there were others in this place, besides our women friends, whom we could pity. For two hours every forenoon a low, dark-complexioned man, with somewhat of a military carriage, took his walk to and fro under the garden wall, at the greatest allowable distance from, but parallel with our yard. He was an object of interest to us, and we often bowed to him, which he always politely returned. He had been, we were informed, a long time in this prison, and likely to remain much longer, being entirely at the



disposal of the Secretary of State. He had once or twice annoyed the Prince Regent by obtaining access to his presence and demanding payment of a large sum of money, which he asserted the Prince owed him, he being "The King of Denmark." He had been imprisoned before for such annoyances; and soon after his liberation he went again, and attempted to ride into the palace of Carlton House, for the purpose of obtaining "his money" from "his cousin," the Regent of England. He was said to be perfectly sane in all matters except these—viz., that he was the King of Denmark, and that our King owed him a great sum of money. The elder Evans, one of the London prisoners, a wordy and intemperate man, was also allowed his stated walks in the garden, but he never ventured to exchange a word with us.

On Tuesday, the 16th of April, we were again taken to the Home Office. John Roberts was called in first, Hulton second, Healey third, and myself the fourth, when Lord Sidmouth thus addressed me:—"Mr. Bamford, the persons who have been examined to day are committed to prison, from whence they will not be liberated except by a due course of law. From the information received respecting you, his Majesty's ministers would not be justified in adopting the same course towards you; you will therefore be brought up for another examination, which will take place this day week." I then retired.

The day following Roberts, Hulton, and the doctor were taken out of our ward and sent to different prisons. Roberts, with John Bagguley, before mentioned as an orator at the Blanket meeting, were consigned to Gloucester Gaol. Hulton and Sellers were sent to Exeter; whilst John Johnstone, of Manchester, also before mentioned, Samuel Drummond, of the same place, and our friend the doctor, were conveyed to Dorchester.

The day after their departure George Plant, of Blackley, William Kent, of Chadderton, and James Leach, of Spotland, who were apprehended at the Plot meeting at Ardwick, and had remained in the New Bailey since, arrived in London; and after passing in review before the Privy Council, as we

had done, were brought to this general *depôt* for all dangerous and suspected characters. Kent, who had a lame arm, was placed in the hospital; Leach was put in the outer yard; and Plant was locked up with Lancashire and myself.

My new comrade was, I should suppose, about twenty-five years of age; he was a weaver, and had left a wife and one or two young children, at Crab-lane-head, in Blackley, near Manchester. He was fully as tall as myself; thin, very pale, with black hair, black eyes, thick lips, big white teeth, a kind of stiffness, and a stoop in the shoulders. He was indeed, in person, rather an oddity; but I believe as simple and innocent intentioned a man as could be produced. He related some curious particulars of the conduct adopted towards him by the police of Manchester, during his detention at the New Bailey.

He said that Joseph Platt, one of the police beadles, who had formerly known him, and whose parents were then neighbours to Plant, came to him one night in his cell, and, after reminding him of old acquaintance and expressing much friendship towards him, said he had obtained permission to make a proposal, and it would be his fault if he did not take advantage of it for his own good. Two of the persons already sent to London, he continued, had offered, on condition that their lives were spared, to disclose the whole of the Manchester plot, and to give details of the proceedings of the conspirators at their several meetings. These discoveries, he said, would place all the rest in jeopardy, and they might think well if they got off with transportation for life. He added that, knowing Plant, and having a great respect for him, and a kind feeling towards his family, he had, as a great favour, obtained permission from the magistrates to mention the thing to him, and to say that if he (Plant) would come forward and give a statement of all he knew about the conspiracy he should have the first chance of becoming King's evidence, and of thereby saving his life, procuring his freedom, at any rate, and very likely of getting something handsome in the way of a provision afterwards.

George assured me that his only reply to this—which was

repeated on a second visit—was, that “he knew nothing, and could not, therefore, tell anything”; that such had been his constant answer, that he never in the least varied it, and that at length his friend Platt gave him up, and resigned him, as he said, to the scaffold or to perpetual chains abroad.

If such was his answer to Platt—and I never had any reason for doubting it—he certainly gave the true one. He had never been at a plot-meeting before the one at Ardwick, and the proceedings at that had scarcely commenced when the police arrived and took the whole party into custody.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE BOTANIST—THE BIRD CATCHER AND THE LOVER— THEIR AGREEMENT.

AND now, reader, the natural current of my story leads us from this prison to the deep woods, sombre shades, and bare wilds of Lancashire, to speculations and ceremonials founded on superstitions of the rural population, and to beings and appearances, a thorough belief in which does even in the present day retain its place amongst the undeniable evidences narrated by the dwellers of the glens and moorlands of the county. At the time I am writing of, such opinions were still more prevalent than at present; when I was a child, a disbelief of them was looked on as an almost impious exception; they are now quickly departing from amongst us, and in another twenty years will probably be entirely ranked amongst the obsolete superstitions of a benighted age.

But, to be more explicit, know that my friend Plant was a firm believer in ghosts, witches, and hobgoblins, in the virtues of herbs under certain planetary influences, and in the occult mysteries of Culpepper and Sibley. He was entirely self-taught; had been a great reader, knew something of arithmetic, was a botanist, and a dreary-minded wanderer in lonely dells, on moors and heaths, searching after herbs of surpassing virtue, of mysterious growth and concealment, and of wonderful and unaccountable power.

How a man of his tastes and pursuits became induced to resign them for the culture of unpoetic politics it might perhaps be interesting to inquire. Possibly he was drawn into the vortex by the force of example amongst his numerous



class. Possibly, being a knowledge seeker, he might wish to learn something of the new doctrine—the great political “Heal-all.” Possibly his little learning was flattered, and latent ambition urged him to seek distinction; or, assigning higher motives, he might really wish to render a service to his country. However it was, he proved unfortunate; his first experiment in the political line was also his last.

One night after we were locked up, having drawn near the fire and lighted our pipes, we entered as usual into conversation, which he soon led to his favourite subject—botany. We discussed the occult virtues of herbs, and their connection with the spiritual and planetary worlds, in which he believed as firmly as in his own existence. I did not dispute with him, but was rather an inquirer and a listener; and as he narrated, in perfect assurance of their realities, the visionary experiments he had made, and their strange and fearful results, I enjoyed the illusions of the superstitions of my childhood which now recurred, as it were, like a tide after a long ebb, with double force. I felt interested, encouraged him to continue, and he finished by recounting an attempt in which he was once concerned, to take and carry off “Saint John’s Fern seed.”

He said that in one of his, “Yarbin Eawts,” as he termed his rambles after herbs, he was in Guestless, or more properly, Griselhurst Wood, in Birkle, when a storm induced him to seek shelter in a cottage which he had observed at no great distance from the wood-side. He was made welcome, and pulled off his coat and hung it to dry before the fire, which the good woman improved by adding coal and root-stocks to the blazing heap. She was a widow about middle age, and had an only child, a son, a decent-looking youth, who sat mending her clogs beneath the window. He might be from eighteen to twenty years of age, very fair for a country lad, with light red, or “gowden-coloured,” hair; tall, and of a thoughtful way of speaking. The room was barely furnished but clean, and the articles were well arranged. There was a bread-flake covered with oak cakes, a bit of nice bacon, part of a sack of potatoes, and a “drink mug,” reaming with ale; and he was given to

understand that "decent, honest foke" were sometimes accommodated there both with meat and drink; that, in short, it was a "hush shop." He accordingly ordered a jug of ale, and cut a rasher of bacon, which he was roasting on a fork, when the door opened, and a short, broad-set, and dark-visaged man entered, carrying two cages, with each a gorse-cock, a pot with some bird-lime and water, and a number of limed twigs.

"Hallo, Chirrup," said the young man, "I thowt if th' storm didno' send thee fro' th' hillside, summut wud be op." "Why, indeed, it's likely to be a weet afternoon; an' th' brids are o' away to th' covers, an' th' twigs are weet an' winno howd iv owt coom, an' th' wynt makes sitch a din, at no gorse-cock can be yerd ogen it; an' I've had quite enoof for to-day, for I've seen that at I shall never forget to th' last day o' my life." "Wot wur it, Chirrup?" said the young man, laying down the clog, and looking earnestly at the bird-catcher, for such he was. "Bangle, my lad, it wur th' bonnyist brid at ever flew o' wings." "Well, then, it wur nother gorse-cock, ouzle, nor dunnoek, at any rate; an' yo'd no coers to catch it wi'. But wot wur it like; wot kullur wur it?" "It wur as fair a gowden yallo' as ever glizzent; wi' white wings o'th' untherside." "That wur indeed a strange brid," said Bangle; "but wot mickle wur it, and wot wur it like i' shap?" "It wur as like an ouzle as owt as ever theaw seed i' the lyve, o' but th' kuller," said Chirrup. "An' weer did it come fro', an' wot becoom on it?" inquired the earnest Bangle. "I seed it fost ut top ov a stone wall; it wur plumin its wings i'th' sunleet, an' it lookt like a thing o' livin gowd—it made my heart jump. An' then it coom nar th' cages, an' then nar th' twigs; an' I thowt if ever mon won heaven, I should get that brid; an' I lee beind th' rush hoyle, panting till I could yer my heart thump—that bonny innocent brid—I thowt it wur mine, an' thur coom a glare o' leet at made o' dazzle agen, an' thoose white wings flash'd, an' away it went i'th glizzen, an' th' thunner-din, o'er th' moor." "An' weer wurto when theaw seed it?" inquired Bangle. "I wurno far off Owd Birkle, an' just oppo' th' edge o'th' Wilder Moor." "Aye, there's bonny

brids bin seen i' Owd Birkle afore," said the youth, flushing red, and then pale as a sheet. "But the bonnyist it seems hasno' bin taen yet." "Nowe, I wish it wur," interrupted Chirrup; "I'd giv o'th' cocks an' linnits at ever I cag'd, for yon beauty at I've seen an' lost to-day." "Happen not lost," observed Plant; "while there's life there's hope." "Thank yo' for that," said the youth Bangle; "while there's life, there's hope; aye, while there's life, there's hope." "Did I not olis tell the so," said his mother, looking significantly at Plant and Chirrup. "One on yo wants a brid, an' one a bride; but faint heart never won fair lady; an' lyen i' rush hoyles till th' bally warches 'll never catch yallo' wagtails." "It wur as much a wagtail as theaw'rt a dagtail," said Chirrup, "an' theaw'd be pottert iv only body co'd the so." "Wagtail or not," said the woman, "it wur a brid o' some sense, for it chose to fly wi' th' thunner devils sooner nor tarry wi' thy daubing lime twigs. I howd it *wit* good ut ony rate. As for that gawmblyn o' mine," she continued, "he met ha' had his coo-dove lung sin, iv he'd nobbut ha' follod th' advice o' Limping Billy at Radcliffe. His feyther, dyed an' gwon as he is, wudno ha' ston sighen' an' yammerin' as this dus; he coom a kworten i'th' owd way, lung dree miles fro' Affeside, an' iv th' dur wurno oppent when he coom, he'd ha' punst it oppen. He didno come glooring at th' chimney reech an' then maunder back again."

The rain having set in dree, and several jugs of ale having been emptied, a free discourse ensued between Plant, Chirrup, and young Bangle, in which the woman occasionally took a part; and it was soon explained to Plant, for Chirrup seemed to have known some of the circumstances before, that the youth was love-smitten, and almost hopelessly so, the object of his passion being a young beauty residing in the house of her father, who held a small milk-farm on the hillside, not far from Old Birkle. The lad was of an ardent temperament, but bashful, as the truest lovers often are. His modest approaches had not been noticed by the adored one, and, as she had danced with another youth at Bury fair, he imagined she was irrecoverably lost to him, and the persuasion had almost



driven him melancholy. Doctors had been applied to, but he was no better; philters and charms had been tried to bring down the cold-hearted maid, but all in vain—

He sought her at the dawn of day;  
He sought her at the noonin';  
He sought her when the evenin' grey  
Had brought the hollow moon in.

He called her on the darkest night,  
With wizard spells to bind her;  
And when the stars arose in light,  
He wandered forth to find her.

At length sorcerers and fortune-tellers were thought of, and Limping Billy,\* a noted seer, residing at Radcliffe Bridge, having lastly been consulted, said the lad had no chance of gaining power over the damsel unless he could take Saint John's Fern seed; and if he but secured three grains of that he might bring to him whatever he wished, that walked, flew, or swam.

"Iv that's so," said Chirrup, on hearing the last, "I'd goo to th' seet o' devil-dom to win yon brid." "I'd goo to th' smell on't to win mine," said young Bangle. "An' I'd go to th' leet on't," said Plant, who had been listening with much interest to the conversation, and who had for years been wishful to engage companions for trial of that mysterious experiment. He then opened to them his lore in botany, telling them of wonderful herbs and sympathies and cures, and concluded by saying that he knew where the finest clump of fern in the country grew, and offered to conduct them to it at the proper time, viz., on the eve of Saint John the Baptist. It was agreed; and meantime Chirrup was to get particular instructions from Limping Billy for taking it; and so, night approaching, and the rain having abated, the three separated, and Plant and Chirrup went to their several homes.

\* See Vol. I. p. 171.



## CHAPTER XX.

BOGGART, OR FEYRIN-HO—FEYRIN-HO KLOOF—ST. JOHN'S FERN.

ON the left hand, reader, as thou goest towards Manchester, ascending from Blackley, is a rather deep valley, green swarded, and embowered in plantations and older woods. A driving path, which thou enterest by a white gate hung on whale-jaw posts, leads down through a grove of young trees, by a modern and substantial farmhouse, with green shutters, sashed windows, and flowers peeping from the sills. A mantle of ivy climbs the wall, a garden is in front, and an orchard redolent of bloom, and fruit in season, nods on the hill-top above. Here, at the time Plant was speaking of, stood a very ancient house, built partly of old-fashioned bricks, and partly of a timber frame, filled with raddlings and daub (wicker-work, plastered with clay). It was a lone and desolate-looking house indeed, misty and fearful, even at noon-day. It was known as "Boggart-ho," or "Feyrin-ho"; and the gorge in which it is situated was and still is known as "Boggart," or "Feyrin-ho' Kloof," "the glen of the hall of spirits." Such a place might we suppose Milton had in contemplation when he wrote the passage of his inimitable poem—

"Tells how the drudging goblin sweat,  
To earn his cream-bowl, duly set,  
When, in one night, ere glimpse of morn,  
His shadowy flail had thrash'd the corn  
Which ten day-labourers could not end;  
Then lies him down, the lubber fiend;  
And, stretch'd out all the chimney's length,  
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,  
And cropful, out of door he flings,  
Ere the first cock his matin sings."

By the side of the house, and through the whole length of the valley, wends a sickly, tan-coloured rindle, which, issuing from the great White Moss, comes down, tinged with the colour of its parent swamp. Opposite the modern house a forbidden road cuts through the plantation on the right towards Moston Lane. Another path leads behind the house, up precipitous banks, and through close bowers, to Booth Hall; and a third, the main one, proceeds along the kloof, by the side of the stream, and under sun-screening woods, until it forks into two roads: one a cattle track to "The Bell," in Moston, and the other a winding and precipitous footpath to a farmhouse at "Wood End," where it gains the broad upland, and emerges into unshaded day.

About half way up this kloof is an open cleared space of green and short sward: it is probably two hundred yards in length, by sixty in width, and passing along it from Blackley a group of fine oaks appear on a slight eminence, a little to the left. This part of the grove was, at the time we are concerned with, much more crowded with underwood than at present.\* The bushes were then close and strong; fine sprouts of "yerth-groon" hazel and ash were common as nuts, whilst a thick bush of bramble, wild rose, and holly, gave the spot the appearance of a place inclosed and set apart for mysterious concealment. Intermingled with these almost impervious barriers were tufts of tall green fern, curling and bending gracefully, and a little separate from them, and nearer the old oaks, might be observed a few fern clumps of a singular appearance, of a paler green than the others, with a flatter and a broader leaf, sticking up, rigid and expanded, like something stark with mute terror. These were "Saint John's Fern," and the finest of them was the one selected by Plant for the experiment now to be described.

A little before midnight, on the eve of Saint John, Plant, Chirrup, and Bangle were at the whale-jaw gate, before mentioned, and, having slightly scanned each other, they pro-

\* Those oaks have been felled, and the kloof is now comparatively denuded of timber; the underwood on the left side is also nearly swept away. Sad inroads on the ominous gloom of the place! (*Bamford.*)

ceeded, without speaking, until they had crossed the brook at a stepping-place opposite the old Feyrin-ho'. The first word spoken was, "What hast thou?"

"Mine is breawn an' roof,"

said Plant, exhibiting a brown earthen dish. "What hast thou?" he then asked.

"Mine is breet enough,"

said Chirrup, showing a pewter platter; and continued, "What hast thou?"

"Teed wi' web an' woof,  
Mine is deep enough,"

said Bangle, displaying a musty, dun skull, with the cap sawn off above the eyes, and left flapping like a lid, by a piece of tanned scalp, which still adhered. The interior cavities had also been stuffed with moss and lined with clay, kneaded with blood from human veins; and the youth had secured the skull to his shoulders by a twine of three strands of unbleached flax, of undyed wool, and of woman's hair; from which also depended a raven black tress, which a wily crone had procured from the maid he sought to obtain.

"That will do,"

said a voice, in a half whisper, from one of the low bushes they were passing. Plant and Chirrup paused; but Bangle, who had evidently his heart on the accomplishment of the undertaking, said, "Forward, if we turn now a spirit hath spoken, we are lost. Come on," and they went forward.

A silence, like that of death, was around them as they entered on the open platting. Nothing moved either in tree or brake. Through a space in the foliage the stars were seen pale in heaven; and a crooked moon hung in a bit of blue, amid motionless clouds. All was still and breathless, as if earth, heaven, and the elements were aghast. Anything would have been preferable to that unnatural stillness and

silence—the hoot of the night owl, the larum of the pit sparrow, the moan of the wind, the toll of a death bell, or the howl of a ban-dog would, inasmuch as they are things of this world, have been welcome sounds amid that horrid pause. But no sound came, no object moved.

Gasping, and with cold sweat oozing on his brow, Plant recollected that they were to shake the fern with a forked rod of witch hazel, and by no means must touch it with their hands; and he asked in a whisper if the others had brought one. Both said they had forgotten, and Chirrup said they had better never have come; but Plant drew his knife, and stepping into a moonlighted bush, soon returned with what was wanted, and they went forward.

The green knowe—the old oaks—the encircled space—and the fern—were now approached; the latter stiff and erect in a gleamy light.

“Is it deep neet?” said Bangle.

“It is,” said Plant.

“The star that bids the shepherd fold,  
Now the top of heaven doth hold.”

And they drew near. All was still and motionless.

Plant knelt on one knee and held his dish under the fern.

Chirrup held his broad plate next below, and

Bangle knelt, and rested the skull directly under both, on the green sod, the lid being up.

Plant said—

“Good Saint John, this seed we crave,  
We have dared; shall we have?”

A voice responded—

“Now the moon is downward starting.  
Moon and stars are all departing;  
Quick, quick; shake, shake;  
He whose heart shall soonest break  
Let him take.”

They looked, and perceived by a glance that a venerable form, in a loose robe, was near them.



Darkness came down like a swoop. The fern was shaken, the upper dish flew into pieces, the pewter one melted, the skull emitted a cry, and eyes glared in its sockets; lights broke, beautiful children were seen walking in their holiday clothes, and graceful female forms sung mournful and enchanting airs.

The men stood terrified and fascinated; and Bangle, gazing, bade "God bless 'em." A crash followed, as if the whole of the timber in the kloof was being splintered and torn up, strange and horrid forms appeared from the thickets, the men ran as if sped on the wind—they separated and lost each other. Plant ran towards the old house, and there, leaping the brook, he cast a glance behind him, and saw terrific shapes, some beastly, some part human, and some hellish, gnashing their teeth, and howling and uttering the most fearful and mournful tones, as if wishful to follow him, but unable to do so.

In an agony of terror he arrived at home, not knowing how he got there. He was, during several days, in a state bordering on unconsciousness; and when he recovered he learned that Chirrup was found on the White Moss, raving mad, and chasing the wild birds. As for poor Bangle, he found his way home over hedge and ditch, running with supernatural and fearful speed—the skull's eyes glaring at his back, and the nether jaw grinning and jabbering frightful and unintelligible sounds. He had preserved the seed, however, and having taken it from the skull, he buried the latter at the cross-road from whence he had taken it. He then carried the spell out, and his proud love stood one night by his bedside in tears. But he had done too much for human nature; in three months after she followed his corpse, a real mourner, to the grave!

Such was the description my fellow prisoner gave of what occurred in the only trial he ever made with Saint John's Fern seed. He was full of old and quaint narratives and of superstitious lore, and often would beguile time by recounting them. Poor fellow! a mysterious fate hung over him also. After his return from London, which was in a few days, he

seemed to have become disgusted by the levity of his young and handsome but thoughtless wife. In a short time he suddenly disappeared from the country, and has not been heard of since.

## CHAPTER XXI.

AUTHOR'S FOURTH APPEARANCE BEFORE THE PRIVY COUNCIL—A MOTHER'S LAMENTATION FOR HER CHILD—A PAIR OF COCK-NEYS—FIFTH ATTENDANCE BEFORE THE PRIVY COUNCIL, AND AUTHOR'S DISCHARGE.

It was, I think, on the 23rd of April that I was taken to the Home Office, with George Plant, for my fourth examination. Having been introduced in the customary way, Lord Sidmouth said, "Mr. Bamford, the information which we expected to have received respecting you is not yet arrived; therefore you will be remanded for another examination, which will take place next week." To which I replied, "My lord, if you think proper to wait for information which will establish a charge of high treason against me, your lordship may wait for ever, as I am certain that no such information will arrive. I also went on to state that my conduct had been quite opposed to treason, that I had certainly done all which lay in my power to promote the cause of Parliamentary reform, but I had always acted openly, and I trusted legally, that I did not think his Majesty's ministers were fully acquainted with the state of the country and the condition of the people; nor did I perceive how they could be, considering the partial source from whence their information must be derived; that the gentry, or what were called the higher classes, were too proud or too indifferent to examine minutely the abode of the poor and distressed; and that the interests of many, as well as their want of accurate knowledge, tended to elicit from them distorted or partial statements of facts. The poor, I said, would be content could they only procure the

common necessities of life by hard labour, but they could not even do that; and if ministers were thoroughly acquainted with the distress of the people, they would be almost surprised that the country was not a scene of confusion and horror, instead of being, as it was, peaceable though discontented. I said more than this, to the same purport; but the above are the principal heads on which I touched. The Council, as they always did, listened to me with patience and attention; and whatever I said was written down by gentlemen who appeared to be clerks or secretaries. I was then reconducted, and I and Plant were lodged in our old quarters; the day following he was discharged, and I was left alone.

One evening, as I was pacing my yard thoughtfully, and somewhat touched by that "hope deferred which maketh the heart sick," I was startled, astonished, and affected by a sudden burst of the most mournful and woe-fraught cries that ever struck my ear or moved my heart. At first it was a wild and agonised scream, intense and full, as if the soul was coming forth in unspeakable woe. It was a long time ere I could distinguish words amid that pity-moving cry; at length I heard a name and words of endearment. "My Ann," "my love," "my child." It was the name of my own child; and I must leave to parents who have known separation from their homes and their offspring, the task of appreciating my feelings, whilst, transfixed and listening, I caught the name of one so dear, accompanied by the most heart-broken lament that I had ever heard from human suffering. "My Ann!" "my love!" "my child!" "my beauty!" "my lost love!" and so she continued, raising and lowering her voice in an almost musical though entirely unartificial cadence, and in the simplest utterance of soul affliction. The mourner was a female convict, and the tidings had been brought to her in her cell that her child was dead.

Poor thing! I then felt that others might be more unhappy than myself, that I had still something to be thankful for, that I had yet a dove-nest in reserve at least—I so hoped—to which I could return after the present storm had blown over; and I retired to my ward for the night, contented with



my lot, and entirely cured of the melancholy of "hope deferred." But the tones of that poor woman still rung in my ears ; and I either dreamt of, or heard her cries, mingled with the night-wind, and resounding through the corridors of the prison.

On the 29th of April I was again introduced to the Privy Council. Lord Sidmouth said, "Mr. Bamford, I hope you are now before me for the last time. You will be discharged on conditions which will be read over to you ; the same conditions which others of your fellow prisoners who have been discharged have accepted. I assure you I feel great pleasure in thus restoring you to your family." I said I hoped nothing would be proposed to me which was at variance with my political principles, as I could not consent to forego any rights to which, as an Englishman, I was entitled. His lordship could not desire me to give up the only right I had exercised—namely, the right of petition. His lordship said :—"Nothing will be proposed to you which an honest and a good man need object to. We are not averse to the subject petitioning for a redress of grievances ; it is the manner in which that right has been exercised which we condemn ; a right may be exercised in such a way that it becomes a wrong, and then we must object to it. Mr. Bamford, there are three things which I would have you to impress seriously on your mind. The first is, that the present distress of the country arises from unavoidable circumstances ; the second, that his Majesty's ministers will do all they can to alleviate such distress ; and thirdly, no violence, of whatever description, will be tolerated, but it will be put down with a very strong hand. I wish you well ; I assure you I wish you well, and I hope this is the last time I shall ever see you on an occasion like the present." I sincerely thanked his lordship for his good wishes and condescension, and expressed my gratitude for the kindness I had experienced whilst his lordship's prisoner ; and having asked, and very obligingly obtained, permission to have my liberty the following morning until the coach started, I bowed to his lordship and the Council and retired.

I was next conducted to the private office of Sir Nathaniel

Conant, which was in a lower room in the same building, where, in the presence of Sir Nathaniel and a clerk, I gave my personal bond in the sum of a hundred pounds, to be levied on my goods and chattels, "if, within twelve months from that day, I appeared in his Majesty's Court of Justice at Westminster."

## CHAPTER XXII.

FURTHER KINDNESS FROM THE KING'S MESSENGERS—A GLIMPSE  
AT THE "INFERNALS" — DEPARTURE FROM PRISON —  
ARRIVAL AT HOME.

I MUST own that I did not clearly comprehend the meaning of this bond. I could not guess at the reason why I was not to "appear in his Majesty's Court of Justice at Westminster" as well as any other British subject, and I could only account for the exception by supposing it was the common form—a mere official ceremony; indeed, Sir Nathaniel intimated as much, and Lord Sidmouth had said it was only what the others had agreed to. I afterwards, however, had reason to suppose that it was intended to deter me, should I become so disposed, from commencing an action in the above Court for false imprisonment, which I could have done, the Indemnity Bill not having then passed. I should imagine, however, that my bond could hardly have kept me out of court\* unless the law could be made to commit *felo de se*; unless it could be made to forbid a subject from claiming the law. But these questions I must leave to those who are learned in such matters.

On returning from Sir Nathaniel's office to the messengers'-room, I was warmly congratulated by Mr. Williams, one of the kind messengers who brought myself and companions from Manchester. He cautioned me in a friendly manner as to my future interference in politics, and concluded by inviting me to his house the morning following, and soon after I stepped into the coach and was conducted to my old quarters for the night.

\* Certainly not as a plaintiff. He had merely been required to enter into his own recognisances to keep the peace for twelve months.

After breakfast on the succeeding morn I collected every article I had left in the provision and grocery line, and conveyed them under the door to the women, and bidding them farewell I told them to keep up their spirits and mind their good resolutions, and with a thousand thanks and their best wishes I left them, and passed into the inner yard of the prison. Here I encountered my fellow captive, James Leach, from Rochdale. He was much affected, and expressed great anxiety as to the duration of his imprisonment, and whether it were likely to end in a capital charge, or be merely detention as a State prisoner. I consoled him as well as I could, and told him I now thought it would be imprisonment only, and that not of long duration. He sat down on a stone and shed tears. I was grieved to see him so much depressed, and did all in my power to cheer him, promising also to go over and see his mother and other relatives, and inform them of his actual condition and future prospects, and so I left him.

On arriving at the outer gates I found one of the turnkeys smartly dressed, and ready to accompany and conduct me; for I was a stranger to the town, and could not, therefore, have readily found my way; neither was I to be lost sight of until carried off by the coach. He first took me to Mr. Williams's, I think, in Jermyn Street. We were received with much kindness, and after partaking a lunch that gentleman made me a handsome present of clothes. He also consigned to my care as a present from Mr. Dykes, his fellow messenger, a stock of clothes for the doctor and some money for his wife; and I must say that the kindness of these two gentlemen to myself, and to my less fortunate comrades, was such as will, whilst we live, deserve our warmest gratitude.

My conductor, as may be supposed, was rather well acquainted with the town, and with those descriptions of its residents who were most frequently under the cognisance of the police. He asked if I should like, before I quitted London, to look into one or two of the "flash cribs," "shades," and "infernals," as he called them, and I assented. He led me then through lanes and alleys and sombre courts, where our fellow-beings, both male and female, young



and old, appeared in squalid misery; and where a disgusting odour came reeking from the doors and windows of every habitation. I mentally ejaculated—

“Oh! let me live afar from scenes like these,  
Where the winds bend the giant armed trees;  
Bask on my own dear banks of new-blown flowers,  
When thirsty Sol hath supp'd the morning showers.”

The dens we visited were indeed horrid and murky shades. But it was morning, and the thieves and their “pals,” as he termed the repulsive females, seemed drowsy and almost as blind as owls in sunshine. He showed me some characters who had already figured conspicuously at the Old Bailey, and one or two he pointed out who were to be had up again in a short time.

These revelations, the objects they distinguished, and the mode of life they illustrated, were almost wonders to me, and my conductor seemed to enjoy my surprise. I could almost write a book on the scenes and characters I noticed in the course of two hours. But such a production is the less necessary, inasmuch as a clever writer of the present day has, in his life and adventures of a famous housebreaker,\* disclosed quite as much as it is either requisite or agreeable to know of such characters and their modes of life.

After visiting many other places, and gratifying my curiosity as well as the time would permit, I returned to the prison and dined. After again seeing James Leach, and bidding him good-bye, I took leave of Mr. Atkins, the governor, and of Mr. Beckett, the deputy-governor, whose behaviour to me had been uniformly kind, and leaving the prison with my morning's conductor, I mounted the coach at “The Peacock,” Islington, and, quitting London, I arrived at home on the morning of the 2nd of May.

Having taken an early opportunity for delivering to Healey's wife the presents for her husband and herself, I afterwards, in conformity with my promise to James Leach, visited his mother and other relatives at Spotland Bridge, near Rochdale.

\* Harrison Ainsworth's “Jack Sheppard.”

To these poor but industrious and respectable people I gave a faithful account of the situation in which I had left him; told them all about our imprisonment and the treatment we had experienced, and concluded with as consoling a prospect for the future as I thought the facts justified. I felt great pleasure in this latter part of my mission, because I wished to soothe the old woman's uneasiness on account of her son, and I came away with the agreeable assurance that I had contributed to make this family happier than I found it.

I now went to work, my wife weaving beside me, and my little girl, now become doubly dear, attending school, or going short errands for her mother. Why was I not content? Why was not my soul filled and thankful? What would I more? What could mortal enjoy beyond a sufficiency to satisfy hunger and thirst, apparel, to make him warm and decent, a home for shelter and repose, and the society of those he loved? All these I had, and still was craving—craving for something for “the nation,” for some good for every person, forgetting all the time to appreciate and to husband the blessings I had on every side around me; and, like some honest enthusiasts of the present day, supervising the affairs of the nation to the great neglect of my own, of my—

“Hours more dear than drops of gold.”

But it was not with us then as it is now; and we have that excuse to plead. We had none to direct or oppose us, except a strong-handed Government, whose politics were as much hated as their power was dreaded. We had not any of our own rank with whom to advise for the better, no man of other days who had gone through the ordeal of experience, and whose judgment might have directed our self-devotion, and have instructed us that, before the reform we sought could be obtained and profited by, there must be another, a deeper reform, emerging from our hearts, and first blessing our households by the production of every good we could possibly accomplish in our humble spheres, informing us also, and confirming it by all history, that governments might change from the despotic to the anarchical, when as surely as death

would come the despotic again; and that no redemption for the masses could exist save one that should arise from their own virtue and knowledge; that king tyranny and mob tyranny, the worst of all, might alternately bear sway; and that no barrier could be effectually interposed save the self-knowledge and self-control of a reformed people.

But, as I said, we had none such to advise. Our worthy old major\* was to us a political reformer only; not a moral one. His counsels were good so far as they went, but they did not go to the root-end of Radicalism. He seemed to have forgotten, in the simplicity of a guileless heart, good old man as he was, that the people themselves wanted reforming, that they were ignorant and corrupt, and that the source must be purified before a pure and free government could be maintained.

In the absence therefore of such wholesome monition—in the ardour, also, and levity of youth—and impelled by a sincere and disinterested wish to deserve the gratitude of my working fellow countrymen, it is scarcely to be wondered at that I soon forgot whatever merely prudential reflections my better sense had whispered to me whilst in durance, and that, with a strong, though discreetly tempered zeal, I determined to go forward in the cause of Parliamentary reform.

And so, as it were, like another Crusoe, I lay with my little boat in still water, waiting for the first breeze to carry me again to the billows.

\* Cartwright.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

PRIVATE MEETINGS AND PLOTS IN YORKSHIRE—THOMAS BACON  
—AUTHOR'S CAUTION OF HIM—ITS REJECTION—BACON'S  
BETRAYAL AND FATE—BRANDRETH, TURNER, AND LUDLAM  
EXECUTED—OLIVER THE SPY.

Soon after my return I found that a secret influence had been at work during my absence exciting to and carrying on private meetings and suspicious intrigues in our neighbourhood; and that one of my neighbours in particular, whom I wished better, had been so deluded as to give his attendance at one or two meetings of a suspicious character which had been held in Yorkshire. I became aware also, though my information was not very distinct, that my old acquaintance, Joseph Mitchell, and another person, a stranger whom I did not know, were the chief movers in these proceedings, that the stranger had made frequent inquiries after me since my return, and that I might expect to hear shortly of a decisive blow being struck for "the liberties of the country."

I treated these reports with contempt or reprehension, as might be requisite at the time. The enunciation of Mitchell's name certainly did not awaken confidence on my part; nor did the intelligence that he was moving about with a well-dressed and apparently affluent stranger at all tend to repress certain forebodings which had begun to arise in my mind.

One day, when I was at work, a message was sent requesting me to step over to the Dog and Partridge publichouse, which was opposite to where I lived. I went, and found an aged, grey-headed man, stooping beneath probably seventy years, his venerable locks hanging on his shoulders, and having in



one hand a stick, and on the other arm a basket containing rolls of worsted and woollen yarn, and small articles of hosiery, which he seemed to have for sale. On looking at him more steadfastly I recognised him as my old co-delegate to London, from the town of Derby, Thomas Bacon, and I shook him heartily by the hand and sat down beside him. With him was a tall, decent-looking young man, much like a town's weaver, wearing a blue coat, and with a clean white apron wrapped about his waist. After a civil salutation to him also, I addressed friend Bacon, and asked what particular business might have brought him to our part of the country, so far from his residence. With a smile he pointed to his wares, but almost immediately gave me to understand that he carried them only as a disguise to his real business. He said a delegate meeting was to be held in Yorkshire, which would cause a finishing blow to be levelled at the boroughmongers, as I should shortly hear; and that a man from Middleton, whose name he gave, and who attended several previous meetings, was particularly wanted on the present occasion; and he concluded by asking me to direct him to that man.

I paused, as if striving to recollect the person, repeating the name, and considering meantime what might be the consequences to my neighbour if I sent the unconscious emissary to his house, and I finished by declaring there was no such man, and that the name must be a fictitious one. I then took the opportunity to caution my old friend against forming connections so liable to abuse, and so dangerous and unwise, as well as hurtful to the country, directed, as they were, against a strong Government, and for the overthrow, by force, of a national order of things. The old man seemed struck by what I said about the delegate from Middleton having given a false name; but he huff'd at my advice, and said I should, notwithstanding there might be a traitor or two, soon learn something which I at present little understood. I reminded him I had but just returned from a Government prison, and told him that from what I had observed, or been able to gather in various ways, I was sure no force would avail in overturning the present state of things, that I believed

ministers had eyes to see and ears to hear and tongues to whisper whatever occurred; and that he might depend on it neither he nor any persons with whom he might be connected could take one step beyond the pale of the law, without being instantly in the gripe of the executive. I entreated him to consider these things, to pause, and not to be led away and lead others at his time of life.

He drank his beer rather hastily, took up his basket, thanked me for my good wishes, but declined my advice, saying he was "too old a politician to be counselled by one so young as myself"; and so, motioning his companion, they both went down the street, and, to my satisfaction, took the road back towards Manchester.

This pertinacious old man was, in a few weeks after, arraigned for high treason at Derby, and pleading guilty, was, with fourteen others, transported for life: whilst the young man, who was one of the Turners, was hung and beheaded, with the equally unfortunate Brandreth and Ludlam. The stranger whom Joseph Mitchell had so assiduously introduced amongst the discontented classes of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Derbyshire, first inveigled them into treasonable associations, then to armed insurrections; he got them to arm as has been done in the present day, and then betrayed them. How one, if not more, of my neighbours at Middleton escaped has just been shown. I thought it no dishonour to deny a person and a name when apprised that their discovery would probably lead to the ruin of the parties sought after, if not of many others.

That stranger, that betrayer, was Oliver the spy.

It may perhaps not be amiss to refer to a few of the more prominent national events which occurred in the year 1817, after my liberation from prison. On June 13th the Habeas Corpus Act was further suspended. On the 16th Sir Francis Burdett's motion relative to the conduct of Oliver the spy, who had consummated his villainies, and had been accidentally unmasked, was made in the House of Commons. On the 4th of October there were great disturbances at Worcester. On the 18th Jeremiah Brandreth was tried, and found guilty of

high treason, and on the 22nd was sentenced, with Turner and Ludlam, to be executed. On the 5th of November the Princess Charlotte died, lamented by the whole nation; and it was expected, that now the hand of death had struck within the Prince Regent's threshold, his heart would be moved, and he would respite the prisoners under sentence at Derby; especially when he considered that they had been instigated to crime by a Government agent—Oliver the spy. But his heart was untouched, and the day after that on which his daughter expired, they were brought forth and executed. On the 28th of January, 1818, a Bill was introduced into Parliament to restore the Habeas Corpus Act; and on the 10th of March an Indemnity Bill passed.

By this time all the State prisoners had been released, and had arrived at home. My friend Healey returned quite an altered man; instead of being flattish in front, and somewhat gaunt looking, he came home plump and round, and genteelly dressed, with one or two large boxes, a rather heavy purse, and his finger bedizened by a broad gold ring, which he said he had received for an "extraordinary operation on the teeth of a great lady of Devonshire."

James Leach also arrived in Middleton about the same time, on his way home. I went to see him at the public-house where he stopped, and found him also much altered in outward appearance and manner. Instead of the simple-minded and soft-hearted lad I had left at Coldbath Fields, I now found a person smartly attired, and with some cash in his pockets. I perceived also that he affected superiority, and was somewhat distant, and that my neighbours took notice of this. But, as I despised all affectation, and not the less because he displayed it, and as I cared nothing about his motives for coolness, I did not trouble him with any questions on either subject, but merely remarked them, and he went his way.

I found afterwards that this young man and his relatives had been secretly propagating reports that I had acted as a spy for the Government; that I had become that being most abhorrent to my soul; and had, in fact, purchased my own



liberation from prison by betraying this James Leach and my companions.

This was a sore blow to my feelings,—heavier from not being expected, and coupled as it was with deep ingratitude. I had the consolation, however, to know that I had not deserved this at their hands, that I had merited the very reverse of detraction, and that their best good offices would not have been more than equivalent to the entire good faith with which I had served them in their hour of humbled sorrow. But why should I expect them, or their like, to reciprocate with me? Because I judged of them as was then my wont with respect to nearly all mankind, that their sentiments were as disinterested as my own, and that they were worthy of friendship because they stood in need of it. When, however, I found out my error, the pride of an indignant though wounded spirit was my solace, and I looked with serene contempt above the calumny and the calumniators, leaving to time the obliteration of the injury, and the infliction of shame on my detractors.

The principal of these is now reputed to be wealthy. With the aid of political friends he entered the provision line, soon after his return from prison. He has maintained *his* distance and *his* superiority ever since, and he is welcome to both, and his riches to boot. He has, however, never yet found an opportunity to acknowledge the service I formerly rendered him; and it was not until one of the late elections for Rochdale that I obtained distinct evidence of the part he had been playing, though I knew as much; I then, however, sent for him into a public company, where his words were repeated to his face, and, not being able to deny them, or to prove anything against me, he acknowledged the letter, and so I left him, and have ever since held him at *his* distance, and in *his* unenviable superiority.

Healey also scarcely acted the part of a friend in these matters. He heard the slanders, and conveyed them to me by hints and half-sentences—a line of conduct which I should not now tolerate for one moment—but he never spoke out candidly, nor disclosed his authors. He, however, had his



reward. I did that for him which I would have done at the time for the other, or for any friend in need. He became ill of the typhus fever, and when he sent for me he was fast sinking under the worst symptoms of the disorder. He took medicines, but they seemed of no avail, and he expressed his belief that he should die. May I be forgiven, for I swore he should not ! and I got a large tub in which I placed him, and his wife filled it nearly to the brim with water as hot as he could bear. I washed and laved him all over, and then lifted him out, and rubbed him with a cloth till his skin burned, and then I put him into bed, and covered him well up ; he fell into a sound sleep, awoke streaming with perspiration, and from that time he began to get better.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### RENEWED AGITATION FOR REFORM—FEMALES VOTE AT MEETINGS —ORIGIN OF FEMALE UNIONS.

WITH the restoration of the Habeas Corpus Act, the agitation for reform was renewed. A public meeting on the subject was held at Westminster, on the 28th of March and in June; Sir Francis Burdett's motion for reform was negatived in the House of Commons.

Numerous meetings followed in various parts of the country; and Lancashire, and the Stockport borders of Cheshire, were not the last to be concerned in public demonstrations for reform. At one of these meetings, which took place at Lydgate, in Saddleworth, and at which Bagguley, Drummond, Fitton, Haigh, and others were the principal speakers, I, in the course of an address, insisted on the right, and the propriety also, of females who were present at such assemblages voting by a show of hand for or against the resolutions. This was a new idea; and the women, who attended numerous on that bleak ridge, were mightily pleased with it. The men being nothing dissentient, when the resolution was put the women held up their hands amid much laughter; and ever from that time females voted with the men at the Radical meetings. I was not then aware that the new impulse thus given to political movement would in a short time be applied to charitable and religious purposes. But it was so; our females voted at every subsequent meeting; it became the practice, female political unions were formed, with their chairwoman, committees, and other officials; and from us the practice was soon borrowed, very judiciously no doubt,

and applied in a greater or less degree to the promotion of religious and charitable institutions.

Amongst the meetings for reform held in the early part of the summer of 1819 were the one which took place on Spa Fields, London, at which Mr. Hunt was chairman, and another held at Birmingham, at which Major Cartwright and Sir Charles Wolseley \* were elected to act as legislative attorneys for that town in Parliament.

It would seem that these movements in the country induced our friends at Manchester to adopt a course similar to that at Birmingham, and it was accordingly arranged that a meeting for that purpose should be held on St. Peter's Field on the 9th of August. But the object of that meeting having been declared illegal by the authorities, it was countermanded, and another was appointed to be held on the 16th of the same month.

It was deemed expedient that this meeting should be as morally effective as possible, and that it should exhibit a spectacle such as had never before been witnessed in England. We had frequently been taunted by the press with our ragged, dirty appearance at these assemblages ; with the confusion of our proceedings, and the mob-like crowds in which our numbers were mustered ; and we determined that, for once at least, these reflections should not be deserved—that we would disarm the bitterness of our political opponents by a display of cleanliness, sobriety, and decorum, such as we never before had exhibited. In short, we would deserve their respect by showing that we respected ourselves, and knew how to exercise our rights of meeting, as it were well Englishmen always should do, in a spirit of sober thoughtfulness, respectful, at the same time, to the opinions of others.

“Cleanliness,” “sobriety,” “order,” were the first injunctions issued by the committee, to which, on the suggestion of Mr. Hunt, was subsequently added that of “peace.” The fulfilment of the two first was left to the good sense of those who intended to join our procession to this “grand meeting”; the observance of the third and

\* Sir Charles Wolseley, Bart., of Wolseley, Staffordshire.

of the last injunctions—order, peace—were provided for by general regulations. Order in our movements was obtained by drilling; and peace, on our parts, was secured by a prohibition of all weapons of offence or defence, and by the strictest discipline, of silence, steadiness, and obedience to the directions of the conductors. Thus our arrangements, by constant practice and an alert willingness, were soon rendered perfect, and ten thousand men moved with the regularity of ten score.

These drillings were also, to our sedentary weavers and spinners, periods of healthful exercise and enjoyment. Our drillmasters were generally old soldiers of the line, or of militia, or of local militia regiments; they put the lads through their facings in quick time, and soon taught them to march with a steadiness and regularity which would not have disgraced a regiment on parade. When dusk came, and we could no longer see to work, we jumped from our looms and rushed to the sweet, cool air of the fields, or the waste lands, or the green lane-sides. We mustered, we fell into rank, we faced, marched, halted, faced about, countermarched, halted again, dressed, and wheeled in quick succession, and without confusion; or, in the grey of a fine Sunday morn, we would saunter through the mists, fragrant with the night odour of flowers and of new hay, and ascending the Tandle Hills, salute the broad sun as he climbed from behind the high moors of Saddleworth. Maidens would sometimes come with their milk-cans from the farms of Hoolswood or Gerrard-hey, or the fold near us; and we would sit and take delicious draughts, new from the churn, for which we paid the girls in money, whilst a favoured youth or so might be permitted to add something more—a tender word or a salute—when, blushing and laughing, away would the nymphs run for a fresh supply to carry home.

Next would follow a long drill in squads; and so expert were the youths that they would form a line and march down the face, or up the steep, or along the sides of the Rushpenny, and, suddenly halting, would dress in an instant in a manner which called forth the praises of the old campaigners. Then,



when they broke for a little rest, would follow a jumping match, or a race, or a friendly wrestle, or a roll down the hill amid the laughter of others sitting in the sun. Some would be squatted on the lee of a bush of gorse or tall fern ; some reading, some conversing in earnest discussion on the state of trade or national affairs, or on their own privations or those of their neighbours—for few secrets were kept of those matters—some would be seen smoking their pipes, kindled by burning-glasses ; and so till the bugle sounded to drill, and after that, away to breakfast.

Such was one of our drilling parties. There were no arms—there was no use for any, no pretence for any, nor would they have been permitted. Some of the elderly men, the old soldiers or those who came to watch, might bring a walking staff, or a young fellow might pull a stake from a hedge in going to drill or in returning home ; but assuredly we had nothing like arms about us. There were no armed meetings, there were no midnight drillings. Why should we seek to conceal what we had no hesitation in performing in broad day ? Such as I have described were all our drillings, about which so much was afterwards said. We obtained by them all we sought or thought off—an expertness and order whilst moving in bodies ; and there was no hyperbole in the statement which a magistrate afterwards made on oath, that “ the party with the blue and green banners came upon the field in beautiful order ! ” adding, I think, that “ not until then did he become alarmed.”

Some extravagancies, some acts, and some speeches better left alone certainly did take place. When the men clapped their hands in “ standing at ease,” some would jokingly say it was “ firing,” whilst those who were sent to observe us (and probably we were seldom unattended by such), and who knew little about military motions, would take the joke as a reality, and report accordingly ; whence probably it would be surmised that we had arms, and that our drillings were only preparatory to their more effective use.

On the afternoon of Friday, the 13th of August, I saw Mr. Hunt, at the residence of Mr. Johnson, at Smedley. Tuke,

the painter, was amending Mr. Hunt's portrait, as indeed it wanted. In the course of conversation Mr. Hunt expressed himself as apprehensive lest the people from the country should bring arms to the meeting on the following Monday; and he desired me to caution those from Middleton against so doing. He also showed me a letter on a placard, addressed to "The Reformers of Manchester and its Neighbourhood," wherein he entreated them to come to the meeting "armed only with a self-approving conscience." He said that if the soldiers did attack the people, and take their caps of liberty and their banners, still he hoped they would proceed to the meeting, and not commit any violence.

I must own that this was new and somewhat unpalatable advice to me. I had not the most remote wish to attack either person or property, but I had always supposed that Englishmen, whether individually or in bodies, were justifiable by law in repelling an attack when in the King's peace, as I certainly calculated we should be, whilst in attendance at a legally constituted assemblage. My crude notions led me to opine that we had a right to go to this place, and that, consequently, there would not be any protection in law to those who might choose to interrupt us in our right. I was almost certain there could be no harm whatever in taking a score or two of cudgels, just to keep the specials at a respectful distance from our line. But this was not permitted.

Still I scarcely liked the idea of walking my neighbours into a crowd both personally and politically adverse to us, and without means to awe them, or to defend ourselves. Was it not a fact that a numerous body of men had been sworn in to act as special constables?—was not an armed association formed at Manchester? and had not weapons been liberally distributed? and what could we do, if attacked by those men, with nothing to defend ourselves? But Mr. Hunt combated these notions. "Were there not the laws of the country to protect us? would not their authority be upheld by those sworn to administer them? And then was it likely at all that magistrates would permit a peaceable and legal assemblage to be interfered with? If we were in the right, were they not

our guardians? If wrong, could they not send us home by reading the Riot Act? Assuredly, whilst we respected the law, all would be well on our side."

But on the Sunday morning a circumstance occurred which probably eradicated from the minds of the magistrates, and our opponents generally, whatever sentiments of indulgence they might have hitherto retained towards us. It is set forth in the following document:—

"Examination of James Murray, of No. 2, Withy Grove, Manchester, Confectioner, who, on his Oath, saith that on Sunday last, the 15th instant, he was at White Moss, near Middleton, about five miles from Manchester, between three and four o'clock in the morning, and saw there assembled between fourteen and fifteen hundred men, the greatest number of whom were formed in two bodies, in the form of solid squares; the remainder were in small parties of between twenty and thirty each; there were about thirty such parties, each under the direction of a person acting as a drill serjeant, and were going through military movements; that Examinant went amongst them, and immediately one of the drill serjeants asked him to fall in. He said he thought he should soon, or gave some such answer; he then began to move away, upon which some persons who were drilling cried out, 'Spies!' This Examinant, and William Shawcross, and Thomas Rymer and his son (all of whom had accompanied this Examinant from Manchester) continued to retire; the body of men then cried out, 'Mill them!—murder them!' Near one hundred men then pursued this Examinant and his companions; they overtook them near a lane-end, at the edge of the Moss, and began to pelt them with clods of earth. They at last came up to the Examinant and his companions, and beat them very severely. Examinant begged they would not murder him; but the general cry was, 'Damn him! kill him! murder him!' Examinant said, 'You treat me very differently to what nations treat each other's prisoners when they are at war. Suppose that I am an enemy, you ought to treat me as a prisoner.' They said, 'How will you treat us if you take us prisoners when we come to Manchester?'



“Examinant knew at the time that a meeting was appointed for the next day (Monday) at Manchester.

“The men kept beating Examinant all the time; at last they debated among themselves whether they would kill Examinant or forgive him, and they determined to forgive him provided he would go down upon his knees and beg pardon to them, and swear never to be a king’s man again, or to mention the name of a king. Examinant complied to save his life, they standing over him with sticks, as he apprehended, to murder him, provided he had objected. They afterwards went away. Examinant was not previously acquainted with any of the persons assembled that he saw, but is certain that he should know again two of those who beat him.

“The greatest part of the number assembled had stout sticks from three to four feet long.

“In consequence of the ill-treatment received by Examinant as above, he was confined to his bed for three days.

“Sworn at Manchester before me, this }  
21st day of August, 1819. } JAMES MURRAY.  
“RA. FLETCHER.”

Some years afterwards a young man named Robert Lancashire informed me that the detection of, and assault on, these parties happened as follows:—

He said he was coming from his work at Manchester, late on Saturday night, when he fell into company with some men whom he did not know, but who proved to be Murray and his companions. The men began to converse with him chiefly on the state of the country, and, as he was of a communicative turn, they questioned him about the drilling parties, and particularly those which were said to frequent the White Moss; and he told them all he knew about such parties. The people at the “White Lion” at Blackley were up, and they all went into the house and had something to drink, during which he promised to show the men into the road leading to the Moss. He also heard them use expressions to each other which convinced him they were sent by the police to watch the drillers;



and, as they were going to take advantage of others, he determined to do the same by them. He accordingly put them into a road which led to the Moss, and afterwards, taking a shorter way over the fields, he apprised the drillers of the sort of persons who were coming, and the consequence was that they were set upon and beaten, as described by James Murray.

This circumstance, as before intimated, was unfortunate for us. On the return of Murray and his companions to Manchester they were visited by some of the authorities, to whom their statements were given. A special meeting was held at the police office the same forenoon; and it is probable that, at that meeting, it was determined to return a full measure of severity to us on the following day, should any circumstance arise to sanction such a proceeding.

## CHAPTER XXV.

MORNING OF THE 16TH OF AUGUST—ARRANGEMENTS AT MIDDLETON—ADDRESS BY THE AUTHOR—ARRIVAL OF THE ROCHDALE PEOPLE—PROCESSION TOWARDS MANCHESTER—EVENTS OF THE DAY.

THE same forenoon we had a meeting in Langley Dingle, a pleasant and retired spot, where was a sheltered bank sloping towards the sun, with plenty of bushes and dry grass, and a rindle tumbling at our feet. Here—whilst some were sitting, some lying, and some pacing to and fro—we discussed and arranged our plans for the succeeding day.

All allowed that the occurrence at the White Moss was an unfavourable one; and I, now more than ever impressed with the belief that we should meet with opposition of some sort, proposed that a party of men with stout cudgels should be appointed to take care of the colours, in order that, at all events, they might be preserved. This was discussed at some length, but the more confiding views of my neighbours, together with Mr. Hunt's admonition, prevailing, my suggestion was overruled, and we shortly afterward separated.

I may say that, with myself, the preservation of our colours, under any circumstances, was a point of honour worth any sacrifice. Fortunately, more placid views than mine prevailed; and if an aspect of entire confidence could have disarmed party feeling, it would have been done the following morning. But such is seldom the case; and it was not so in the present instance, as will soon appear.

By eight o'clock on the morning of Monday, the 16th of August, 1819, the whole town of Middleton might be said to

be on the alert: some to go to the meeting, and others to see the procession, the like of which, for such a purpose, had never before taken place in that neighbourhood.

First were selected twelve of the most comely and decent-looking youths, who were placed in two rows of six each, with each a branch of laurel held presented in his hand, as a token of amity and peace; then followed the men of several districts in fives; then the band of music, an excellent one; then the colours: a blue one of silk, with inscriptions in golden letters, "Unity and Strength," "Liberty and Fraternity"; a green one of silk, with golden letters, "Parliaments Annual," "Suffrage Universal"; and betwixt them, on a staff, a handsome cap of crimson velvet with a tuft of laurel, and the cap tastefully braided, with the word "*Libertas*" in front. Next were placed the remainder of the men of the districts in fives.

Every hundred men had a leader, who was distinguished by a sprig of laurel in his hat; others similarly distinguished were appointed over these, and the whole were to obey the directions of a principal conductor, who took his place at the head of the column, with a bugleman to sound his orders. Such were our dispositions on the ground at Barrowfields. At the sound of the bugle not less than three thousand men formed a hollow square, with probably as many people around them, and, an impressive silence having been obtained, I reminded them that they were going to attend the most important meeting that had ever been held for Parliamentary Reform, and I hoped their conduct would be marked by a steadiness and seriousness befitting the occasion, and such as would cast shame upon their enemies, who had always represented the reformers as a mob-like rabble; but they would see they were not so that day. I requested they would not leave their ranks, nor show carelessness, nor inattention to the order of their leaders; but that they would walk comfortably and agreeably together. Not to offer any insult or provocation by word or deed; nor to notice any persons who might do the same by them, but to keep such persons as quiet as possible; for if they began to retaliate, the least disturbance might serve as a pretext for dispersing the meeting. If the peace officers should come to

arrest myself or any other person, they were not to offer any resistance, but suffer them to execute their office peaceably. When at the meeting, they were to keep themselves as select as possible, with their banners in the centre, so that if individuals straggled, or got away from the main body, they would know where to find them again by seeing their banners ; and when the meeting was dissolved, they were to get close around their banners and leave the town as soon as possible, lest, should they stay drinking, or loitering about the streets, their enemies should take advantage, and send some of them to the New Bailey. I also said that, in conformity with a rule of the committee, no sticks, nor weapons of any description, would be allowed to be carried in the ranks ; and those who had such were requested to put them aside, or leave them with some friend until their return. In consequence of this order many sticks were left behind ; and a few only of the oldest and most infirm amongst us were allowed to carry their walking staves. I may say with truth that we presented a most respectable assemblage of labouring men ; all were decently, though humbly attired ; and I noticed not even one who did not exhibit a white Sunday's shirt, a neck-cloth, and other apparel in the same clean, though homely condition.

My address was received with cheers ; it was heartily and unanimously assented to. We opened into column, the music struck up, the banners flashed in the sunlight, other music was heard, it was that of the Rochdale party coming to join us. We met, and a shout from ten thousand startled the echoes of the woods and dingles. Then all was quiet save the breath of music ; and with intent seriousness we went on.

Our whole column, with the Rochdale people, would probably consist of six thousand men. At our head were a hundred or two of women, mostly young wives, and mine own was amongst them. A hundred or two of our handsomest girls, sweethearts to the lads who were with us, danced to the music, or sung snatches of popular songs ; a score or two of children were sent back, though some went forward ; whilst on each side of our line walked some thousands of stragglers.



And thus, accompanied by our friends and our dearest and most tender connections, we went slowly towards Manchester.

At Blackley the accession to our ranks and the crowd in the road had become much greater. At Harpurhey we halted, whilst the band and those who thought proper, refreshed with a cup of prime ale from Sam Ogden's tap. When the bugle sounded every man took his place, and we advanced.

From all that I had heard of the disposition of the authorities, I had scarcely expected that we should be allowed to enter Manchester in a body. I had thought it not improbable that they, or some of them, would meet us with a civil and military escort; would read the Riot Act, if they thought proper, and warn us from proceeding, and that we should then have nothing to do but turn back and hold a meeting in our town. I had even fancied that they would most likely stop us at the then toll-gate, where the roads forked towards Collyhurst and Newtown; but when I saw both those roads open, with only a horseman or two prancing before us, I began to think that I had over-estimated the forethought of the authorities, and I felt somewhat assured that we should be allowed to enter the town quietly, when, of course, all probability of interruption would be at an end.

We had got a good length on the higher road towards Collyhurst, when a messenger arrived from Mr. Hunt with a request that we would return, and come the lower road; and lead up his procession into Manchester. I at first determined not to comply. I did not like to entangle ourselves and the great mass now with us in the long hollow road through Newtown, where, whatever happened, it would be difficult to advance or retreat or disperse, and I kept moving on. But a second messenger arrived, and there was a cry of "Newtown," "Newtown," and so I gave the word, "left shoulders forward," and running at the charge step we soon gained the other road, and administered to the vanity of our "great leader," by heading his procession from Smedley Cottage.

A circumstance interesting to myself now occurred. On the bank of an open field on our left I perceived a gentleman observing us attentively. He beckoned me, and I went to

him. He was one of my late employers. He took my hand, and rather concernedly, but kindly, said he hoped no harm was intended by all those people who were coming in. I said "I would pledge my life for their entire peaceableness." I asked him to notice them, "did they look like persons wishing to outrage the law? were they not, on the contrary, evidently heads of decent working families? or members of such families?" "No, no," I said, "my dear sir, and old respected master, if any wrong or violence take place, they will be committed by men of a different stamp from these." He said he was very glad to hear me say so; he was happy he had seen me, and gratified by the manner in which I had expressed myself. I asked, did he think we should be interrupted at the meeting? he said he did not believe we should; "then," I replied, "all will be well"; and shaking hands, with mutual good wishes, I left him, and took my station as before.

At Newtown we were welcomed with open arms by the poor Irish weavers, who came out in their best drapery, and uttered blessings and words of endearment, many of which were not understood by our rural patriots. Some of them danced, and others stood with clasped hands and tearful eyes, adoring almost, that banner whose colour was their national one, and the emblem of their green island home. We thanked them by the band striking up, "Saint Patrick's day in the morning." They were electrified; and we passed on, leaving those warm-hearted suburbans capering and whooping like mad.

Having squeezed ourselves through the gully of a road below St. Michael's Church, we traversed Blackley Street and Miller's Lane, and went along Swan Street and Oldham Street, frequently hailed in our progress by the cheers of the townspeople. We learned that other parties were on the field before us, and that the Lees and Saddleworth Union had been led by Doctor Healey, walking before a pitch-black flag, with staring white letters, forming the words, "Equal Representation or Death," "Love"—two hands joined and a heart; all in white paint, and presenting one of the most sepulchral looking objects that could be contrived. The idea of my diminutive friend leading a funeral procession of his own patients, such it

appeared to me, was calculated to force a smile even at that thoughtful moment.

We now perceived we had lost the tail of our train, and understood we had come the wrong way, and should have led down Shudehill, and along Hanging Ditch, the Market-place, and Deansgate ; which route Hunt and his party had taken. I must own I was not displeased at this separation. I was of opinion that we had tendered homage quite sufficient to the mere vanity of self-exhibition, too much of which I now thought was apparent.

Having crossed Piccadilly, we went down Mosley Street, then almost entirely inhabited by wealthy families. We took the left side of St. Peter's Church, and at this angle we wheeled quickly and steadily into Peter Street, and soon approached a wide unbuilt space, occupied by an immense multitude, which opened and received us with loud cheers. We walked into that chasm of human beings, and took our station from the hustings across the causeway of Peter Street, and so remained, undistinguishable from without, but still forming an almost unbroken line, with our colours in the centre.

My wife I had not seen for some time ; but when last I caught a glimpse of her, she was with some decent married females ; and thinking the party quite safe in their own discretion, I felt not much uneasiness on their account, and so had greater liberty in attending to the business of the meeting.

In about half an hour after our arrival the sounds of music and reiterated shouts proclaimed the near approach of Mr. Hunt and his party ; and in a minute or two they were seen coming from Deansgate, preceded by a band of music and several flags. On the driving seat of a barouche sat a neatly dressed female, supporting a small flag, on which were some emblematical drawings and an inscription. Within the carriage were Mr. Hunt, who stood up, Mr. Johnson, of Smedley Cottage ; Mr. Moorhouse, of Stockport ; Mr. Carlile, of London ; Mr. John Knight, of Manchester ; and Mr. Saxton, a sub-editor of the *Manchester Observer*. Their approach was



hailed by one universal shout from probably eighty thousand persons. They threaded their way slowly past us and through the crowd, which Hunt eyed, I thought, with almost as much of astonishment as satisfaction. This spectacle could not be otherwise in his view than solemnly impressive. Such a mass of human beings he had not beheld till then. His responsibility must weigh on his mind. Their power for good or evil was irresistible, and who should direct that power? Himself alone who had called it forth. The task was great, and not without its peril. The meeting was indeed a tremendous one. He mounted the hustings; the music ceased; Mr. Johnson proposed that Mr. Hunt should take the chair; it was seconded, and carried by acclamation; and Mr. Hunt, stepping towards the front of the stage, took off his white hat, and addressed the people.

Whilst he was doing so, I proposed to an acquaintance that, as the speeches and resolutions were not likely to contain anything new to us, and as we could see them in the papers, we should retire awhile and get some refreshment, of which I stood much in need, being not in very robust health. He assented, and we had got to nearly the outside of the crowd, when a noise and strange murmur arose towards the church. Some persons said it was the Blackburn people coming, and I stood on tip-toe and looked in the direction whence the noise proceeded, and saw a party of cavalry in blue and white uniform come trotting, sword in hand, round the corner of a garden-wall, and to the front of a row of new houses, where they reined up in a line.

"The soldiers are here," I said; "we must go back and see what this means." "Oh," some one made reply, "they are only come to be ready if there should be any disturbance in the meeting." "Well, let us go back," I said, and we forced our way towards the colours.

On the cavalry drawing up they were received with a shout of good-will, as I understood it. They shouted again, waving their sabres over their heads; and then, slackening rein, and striking spur into their steeds, they dashed forward and began cutting the people.



"Stand fast," I said, "they are riding upon us; stand fast." And there was a general cry in our quarter of "Stand fast." The cavalry were in confusion: they evidently could not, with all the weight of man and horse, penetrate that compact mass of human beings; and their sabres were plied to hew a way through naked held-up hands and defenceless heads; and then chopped limbs and wound-gaping skulls were seen; and groans and cries were mingled with the din of that horrid confusion. "Ah! ah!" "for shame! for shame!" was shouted. Then, "Break! break! they are killing them in front, and they cannot get away;" and there was a general cry of "break! break." For a moment the crowd held back as in a pause; then was a rush, heavy and resistless as a headlong sea, and a sound like low thunder, with screams, prayers, and imprecations from the crowd-moiled and sabre-doomed who could not escape.

By this time Hunt and his companions had disappeared from the hustings, and some of the yeomanry, perhaps less sanguinarily disposed than others, were busied in cutting down the flag-staves and demolishing the flags at the hustings.

On the breaking of the crowd the yeomanry wheeled, and, dashing whenever there was an opening, they followed, pressing and wounding. Many females appeared as the crowd opened; and striplings or mere youths also were found. Their cries were piteous and heart-rending, and would, one might have supposed, have disarmed any human resentment: but here their appeals were in vain. Women, white-vested maids, and tender youths, were indiscriminately sabred or trampled; and we have reason for believing that few were the instances in which that forbearance was vouchsafed which they so earnestly implored.

In ten minutes from the commencement of the havoc the field was an open and almost deserted space. The sun looked down through a sultry and motionless air. The curtains and blinds of the windows within view were all closed. A gentleman or two might occasionally be seen looking out from one of the new houses before mentioned, near the door of which a

group of persons (special constables) were collected, and apparently in conversation; others were assisting the wounded or carrying off the dead. The hustings remained, with a few broken and hewed flag-staves erect, and a torn and gashed banner or two dropping; whilst over the whole field were strewed caps, bonnets, hats, shawls, and shoes, and other parts of male and female dress, trampled, torn, and bloody. The yeomanry had dismounted—some were easing their horses' girths, others adjusting their accoutrements, and some were wiping their sabres. Several mounds of human beings still remained where they had fallen, crushed down and smothered. Some of these still groaning, others with staring eyes, were gasping for breath, and others would never breathe more. All was silent save those low sounds, and the occasional snorting and pawing of steeds. Persons might sometimes be noticed peeping from attics and over the tall ridgings of houses, but they quickly withdrew, as if fearful of being observed, or unable to sustain the full gaze of a scene so hideous and abhorrent.

Besides the Manchester yeomanry, who, as I have already shown, did "the duty of the day," there came upon the ground soon after the attack the 15th Hussars and the Cheshire yeomanry; and the latter, as if emulous of the Manchester corps, intercepted the flying masses, and inflicted some severe sabre wounds. The hussars, we have reason for supposing, gave but few wounds, and I am not aware that it has been shown, that one of those brave soldiers dishonoured his sword by using the edge of it. In addition to the cavalry, a strong body of the 88th Foot was stationed at the lower corner of Dickinson Street: with their bayonets at the charge, they wounded several persons, and greatly impeded the escape of the fugitives by that outlet. Almost simultaneously with the hussars, four pieces of Horse artillery appeared from Deansgate, and about two hundred special constables were also in attendance; so that force for a thorough massacre was ready, had it been wanted.

On the first rush of the crowd I called to our men to break their flag-staves and secure their banners, but probably I was

not heard or understood, all being then inextricable confusion. He with the blue banner saved it, the cap of liberty was dropped and left behind—indeed, woe to him who stopped, he would never have risen again; and Thomas Redford, who carried the green banner, held it aloft until the staff was cut in his hand, and his shoulder was divided by the sabre of one of the Manchester yeomanry.

A number of our people were driven to some timber which lay at the foot of the wall of the Quakers' meeting house. Being pressed by the yeomanry, a number sprung over the balks and defended themselves with stones which they found there. It was not without difficulty, and after several were wounded, that they were driven out. A heroine, a young married woman of our party, with her face all bloody, her hair streaming about her, her bonnet hanging by the string, and her apron weighed with stones, kept her assailant at bay until she fell backwards and was near being taken; but she got away covered with severe bruises. It was near this place and about this time that one of the yeomanry was dangerously wounded and unhorsed by a blow from a fragment of a brick; and it was supposed to have been flung by this woman.

On the first advance of the yeomanry, one of the horses plunging at the crowd, sent its fore-feet into the head of our big drum, which was left near the hustings, and was irrecoverable. Thus booted on both legs at once, the horse rolled over, and the drum was kicked to pieces in the *mêlée*. For my own part, I had the good fortune to escape without injury, though it was more than I expected. I was carried, I may say almost literally, to the lower end of the Quakers' meeting house, the further wall of which screened us from observation and pursuit, and afforded access to some open streets. In my retreat from the field a well-dressed woman dropped on her knees a little on my left: I put out my hand to pluck her up, but she missed it, and I left her. I could not stop; and God knows what became of her. Two of the yeomanry were next in our way, and I expected a broken head, having laurel in my hat, but one was striking on one side, and the other on the other, and at that moment I stepped betwixt them and escaped.



After quitting the field, I first found myself in King Street, and passing into Market Street and High Street, I more leisurely pursued my way, taking care, lest some official should notice me, to remove the laurel from the outside to the inside of my hat. I was now unhappy on account of my wife, and I blamed myself greatly for consenting to her coming at all; I learned, however, when in St. George's Road, that she was well, and was on the way towards home; and that satisfied me for the time.

Having met with an old neighbour, we agreed to go round past Smedley Cottage, to learn what intelligence had arrived there. We descended the hill at Collyhurst, and on arriving at the bottom we espied a party of cavalry, whom from their dress I took to be of the Manchester yeomanry, riding along the road we had quitted towards Harpurhey. One of them wore a broad green band, or sash, across his shoulder and breast; I thought from its appearance it was a fragment of our green banner, and I was not mistaken. They were traversing the suburbs to reconnoitre and to pick up any person they could identify (myself, for instance, had I then been in their way), and the inglorious exhibition of the torn banner was permitted for the gratification of the vanity of the captor. This party rode forward a short distance, and then returned, without making any prisoners from our party.

At Smedley Cottage we found Mrs. Johnson, her two children (I think two), her maid-servant, and Mr. Hunt's groom, who had just come from the town, and had brought the information that Mr. Hunt, Mr. Johnson, Knight, Moorhouse, and several others, were prisoners in the New Bailey. I was touched by the lady's situation, though she bore the trial better than I could have expected. We gave her some particulars of the meeting, to which she listened with a manner mournfully thoughtful, occasionally shedding tears, and her features pale and calm as marble. She spoke not much: she was evidently too full to hold discourse, and so, with good wishes and consoling hopes, we took our departure.

We now called at Harpurhey, and found at the public-house, and in the road there, a great number of the Middleton



and Rochdale people, who had come from the meeting. My first inquiry was for my wife, on whose account I now began to be downright miserable. I asked many about her, but could not hear any tidings, and I turned back toward Manchester, with a resolution to have vengeance if any harm had befallen her. But I had not gone far ere I espied her at a distance, hastening towards me; we met, and our first emotions were those of thankfulness to God for our preservation. She had been in greater peril and distress of mind, if possible, than myself: the former she escaped in a remarkable manner, and through the intervention of special constables, to whom let us award their due. She afterwards heard, first, that I was killed; next, that I was wounded and in the Infirmary; then, that I was a prisoner; and lastly, that she would find me on the road home. Her anxiety being now removed by the assurance of my safety, she hastened forward to console our child. I rejoined my comrades, and forming about a thousand of them into file, we set off to the sound of fife and drum, with our only banner waving, and in that form we re-entered the town of Middleton.

The banner was exhibited from a window of the Suffield Arms publichouse. The cap of liberty was restored to us by a young man from Chadderton, who had picked it up on the outskirts of the field; and now we spent the evening in recapitulating the events of the day, and in brooding over a spirit of vengeance towards the authors of our humiliation and our wrong.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

AUTHOR'S OBSERVATIONS AT MANCHESTER—REDFORD AND HIS MOTHER—LUNCH AT THE "TEMPLE"—ARMING AT MIDDLETON.

THOMAS REDFORD, who, as before stated, had been wounded, was going to Manchester the following morning to visit his old mother, and I chose to go with him. At the house of an acquaintance of his, where we first called, we found means to procure a disguise for me, as I was desirous to move about without exciting particular notice. My hat was accordingly changed for an old slouched felt; my lapelled coat for an ancient-looking long-waisted surtout, with broad metal buttons; a handkerchief was tied over my mouth, a stick was in my hand, and a wig concealed my hair; and so attired I walked slowly forth, a tall, pale, and feeble, elderly man—indifferent health had then rendered me pale. I passed many persons, some of the police, who in my ordinary dress would have known me, but they all seemed quite engaged and in a hurry; and so, confident in my disguise, I made my observations at leisure.

All seemed in a state of confusion; the street were patrolled by military, police, and special constables; the shops were closed and silent; the warehouses were shut up and padlocked; the Exchange was deserted; the artillery was ready; and it was reported that thousands of pikemen were on the way to Manchester, from Oldham, Middleton, and other surrounding districts. I entered publichouses, called for my squib of cordial, and listened, saying nothing. I overheard the groups in the streets, and the general opinion was that the authorities were stunned, and at a loss how to proceed; that

many of the wealthy class blamed them, as well for the severity with which they had acted, as for the jeopardy in which they had placed the lives and property of the townspeople; whilst all the working population were athirst for revenge, and only awaited the coming of the country folks to attempt a sweeping havoc.

Some proposals which I heard assented to filled me with horror. The immolation of a selected number of the guilty ones might have been discussed before God and man, but what these men sought would not do; and I retired and put off my dress, more thoughtful than when I took it up. I found Redford's mother bathing his wound with warm milk and water, and to please her he said it was easier. It was a clean gash of about six inches in length and quite through the shoulder blade. She yearned, and wept afresh when she saw the severed bone gaping in the wound. She asked who did it, and Tom mentioned a person; he said he knew him well; and she, sobbing, said she also knew him, and his father and mother before him; and she prayed God not to visit that sin on the head of him who did it, but to change his heart and bring him to repentance. That prayer had well-nigh touched my heart also, but Tom rapped out one of another sort, to which I incontinently, as may be supposed, added my "Amen." The wound having been linted, and bound with sticking-plaster, Tom put on his clothes, the slash in his coat having been sewed, and the blood sponged off by a young woman. His mother then, with many prayers and much good advice, resigned him, as she said, "to the guidance of God, through a wild and weary world." We called at Smedley Cottage, but nothing had been heard of the prisoners since the day preceding.

On arriving at the end of the lane, before descending past Smedley Hall, we met two men with a covered basket, and they asked us to go with them. They both knew me, and one of them I knew well: he was a staunch Radical, and an influential one as I supposed; his name was Chadwick, and he was a shawl weaver, latterly of Stockport. They had got a good lump of a nice leg of roasted veal, and some ham to match

it, and were going to the "Temple" bowling-green to meet some friends, and to discuss their grievances and their viands over a bottle or two of porter. They had taken the meat from a public dinner table in George Leigh Street the day before. A feast had been provided by the reformers for the evening's solacement. After the catastrophe anything, it would seem, was law that could be done, and a band of hungry constables and police hastened to seize the meat; but the reformers, hearing of their intention, removed some of the best joints, and left them to devour the remainder, which they did on the spot, and never paid for it. Such was the account these friends gave of their lunch, and their motive for coming out of town.

We went with them, and met some half dozen others; and a discussion ensued on the state of affairs, and the course that should be taken by the reformers. At last it was agreed to hold a larger meeting the day following on the Tandle Hills, and with mutual pledges to be punctual we separated.

I found when I got home that there had been a general ferment in the town. Many of the young men had been preparing arms, and seeking out articles to convert into arms. Some had been grinding scythes, others old hatches, others screw-drivers, rusty swords, pikels, and mop-nails—anything which could be made to cut or stab was pronounced fit for service. But no plan was defined, nothing was arranged, and the arms were afterwards reserved for any event that might occur.

The day following I attended on the hills with a trusty friend. Notices had been sent to Oldham, Rochdale, Bury, and some other places, but at the time appointed no one appeared. We waited for hours, until the afternoon waned, but no one came; and then we went down to Royton, to ascertain the disposition of the reformers of that place. Some had been severely wounded, but most of the people were carousing, and there did not appear to be any disposition to retaliate the outrage we had suffered by force of arms. I called on William Fitton, but he gave no encouragement to such an idea. I went to John Kay, in Royley Lane, but he was, as usual, im-



perturbably placid. He was one of the least impassioned men I ever knew.

After introducing the cause of my visit I asked his opinion, and in order to obtain it frankly I spoke the more so. "If the people were ever to rise and smite their enemies, was not that the time? Was every enormity to be endured, and this after all? Were we still to lie down like whipped hounds, whom nothing could arouse to resistance? Were there not times and seasons, and circumstances, under which the common rules of wisdom became folly, prudence became cowardice, and submission became criminal? and was not the present one of those times and seasons?" It was astonishing that men could eat and sleep, that "the voice of their brothers' blood crying from the ground did not make them miserable."

"It does make them miserable," said this philosopher, for he was one if ever such existed in humble life, and we are taught to believe as much—"it does make them miserable, and on account of this affair neither you nor I are happy, but our oppressors are wretched. We, according to the impulse of our nature, wish to avenge that outrage. Let us be quiet, it is already in the course of avengement. Those men would, even now, shrink out of existence if they were only assured of getting to heaven quietly. They are already invoking that obliviousness which will never come to their relief."

"Again, if the people took vengeance into their own hands, where would they begin? where would they end? Would they denounce all Manchester and the whole country?" "No, no, the authors and perpetrators only." "But how could they be got at? Would we descend to assassination?" "No, no!" "To indiscriminate massacre, like that we had witnessed?" "Oh, no, no!" "Could we march against an army?" "We had no thought of doing so, we had no thought of anything save avenging in some way our slain and imprisoned fellow-beings." "Then," he said, "we had best remain as we were; we should hear of a sensation in many parts which would forward our cause, but the least outrage on ours would only strengthen the aggressors,

and create that plea of justification which alone could mitigate their remorse." They would exclaim, "See, these are the men who came with peace on their lips; behold now the violence of their hearts—what would they not have done had we not put them down—and so, claiming merit for what they had done, they would next arraign their captives, our friends, and have them executed." Such was the substance of the arguments of our friend John Kay. His reasons had at all times some weight with me; on this occasion they were conclusive.

Several persons from Middleton came to me whilst at Royton. They said that a number of men, representing themselves as deputies, had arrived, and were at the "Suf-field Arms." On going there I found persons from Manchester, Rochdale, and Blackburn. My heart recoiled from one of the former. He was one of those whose atrocious conversation the day before had filled me with disgust. I told them briefly that I would not take any part in a delegate meeting to discuss the taking up of arms; that I saw not any prospect of succeeding, and if I did they were not the men with whom I could act. I had sent for men whom I knew, but they came not; strangers came whose faces I had never seen before, and I would not act with such, neither was it to be expected that I should. I then recapitulated the arguments of my friend John Kay, and advised them to return from whence they came, and they soon after did so. The day following there was another attempt to get up a delegate meeting—the Manchester people seemed determined to have one—but it met with the same fate, and the men, about half a dozen in number, separated without doing any business.

Some days after I was informed of the arrest of Joseph Healey, at Lees. I began to expect something of the sort myself, and told our constable that if he got a warrant, and would let me know, I would go with him any day or night to Manchester, and there should be no fuss, no one should be the wiser. He said he would take that course should he have a warrant, and I attended to my business as usual.

As a narrative collateral with these passages, the account

given by my dear wife of her attendance at the meeting on Saint Peter's Field, and of some incidents which befel her, may not be devoid of interest to the reader, and certainly will not be out of place if introduced here. She says:—

“I was determined to go to the meeting, and should have followed, even if my husband had refused his consent to my going with the procession. From what I, in common with others, had heard the week previous, ‘that if the country people went with their caps of liberty, and their banners, and music, the soldiers would be brought to them,’ I was uneasy, and felt persuaded, in my own mind, that something would be the matter, and I had best go with my husband and be near him, and if I only saw him I should be more content than in staying at home. I accordingly, he having consented after much persuasion, gave my little girl something to please her, and promising more on my return, I left her with a careful neighbour woman, and joined some other married females at the head of the procession.

“Every time I went aside to look at my husband, and that was often, an ominous impression smote my heart. He looked very serious I thought, and I felt a foreboding of something evil to befall us that day. I was dressed plainly as a countrywoman, in my second best attire. My companions were also neatly dressed as the wives of working men. I had seen Mr. Hunt before that time; they had not, and some of them were quite eager to obtain good places, that they might see and hear one of whom so much had been reported. In going down Mosley Street I lost sight of my husband. Mrs. Yates, who had hold of my arm, would keep hurrying forward to get a good place, and when the crowd opened for the Middleton procession, Mrs. Yates and myself, and some others of the women, went close to the hustings, quite glad that we had obtained such a situation for seeing and hearing all. My husband got on the stage, but when afterwards I saw him leap down and lost sight of him, I began to be unhappy. The crowd seemed to have increased very much, for we became insufferably pressed. We were surrounded by men who were strangers, we were almost suffocated, and to me the heat was



quite sickening; but Mrs. Yates, being taller than myself, supported it better.

"I felt I could not bear this long, and I became alarmed. I reflected that if there was any more pressure I must faint, and then what would become of me? and I begged of the men to open a way and let me go out, but they would not move. Every moment I became worse, and I told some other men then, who stood in a row, that I was sick, and begged they would let me pass them, and they immediately made a way, and I went down a long passage betwixt two ranks of these men, many of them saying, 'make way, she's sick, she's sick, let her go out,' and I passed quite out of the crowd, and, turning to my right, I got on some high ground, on which stood a row of houses—this was Windmill Street.

"I thought if I could get to stand at the door of one of those houses I should have a good view of the meeting, and should perhaps see my husband again; and I kept going further down the row until I saw a door open, and I stepped within it, the people of the house making no objections.

"By this time Mr. Hunt was on the hustings addressing the people. In a minute or two some soldiers came riding up. The good folks of the house, and some who seemed to be visitors, said 'the soldiers were only come to keep order, they would not meddle with the people;' but I was alarmed. The people shouted, and then the soldiers shouted, waving their swords. Then they rode amongst the people, and there was a great outcry, and a moment after a man passed without a hat, and wiping the blood off his head with his hand, and it ran down his arm in a great stream.

"The meeting was all in a tumult; there were dreadful cries; the soldiers kept riding amongst the people and striking with their swords. I became faint, and turning from the door I went unobserved down some steps into a cellared passage; and, hoping to escape from the horrid noise, and to be concealed, I crept into a vault and sat down, faint and terrified, on some firewood.

"The cries of the multitude outside still continued, and the people of the house, upstairs, kept bewailing most pitifully.



They could see all the dreadful work through the window, and their exclamations were so distressing, that I put my fingers in my ears to prevent my hearing more ; and on removing them, I understood that a young man had just been brought past, wounded. The front door of the passage before mentioned soon after opened, and a number of men entered, carrying the body of a decent, middle-aged woman, who had been killed. I thought they were going to put her beside me, and was about to scream, but they took her forward and deposited her in some premises at the back of the house.

“I had sat in my hiding-place some time, and the tumult seemed abated, when a young girl, one of the family, came into the vault, and suddenly crouching, she bumped against my knee, and starting up and seeing another dead woman, as she probably thought, she ran upstairs, quite terrified, and told her mother. The good woman, Mrs. Jones, came down with the girl and several others, and having ascertained that I was living, but sadly distressed, she spoke very kindly, and assisted me to a chair in her front room. She offered me refreshment, and would have made tea, but I declined it. I was too unhappy to take anything except a little water. I could not restrain my feelings, but kept moaning and exclaiming, ‘My lad—my poor lad!’ They asked if I was married, and I said I was, and had lost my husband in the crowd, and was afraid he was killed. Those good people did all they could to comfort me. They asked where I came from, and my husband’s name ; and I told them I came from Middleton, but evaded mentioning his name, lest, on account of his being a leader, I should be put in prison ; for though they had behaved most kindly, I doubted whether they would continue to do so if they knew whose wife I was.

“I now became wishful to go, and Mrs. Jones called a special constable, and requested he would see me into Market Street, from whence I could find my way. The man very civilly took my arm, and led me over the now almost deserted field. I durst not look aside lest I should encounter some frightful object, and particularly that which I most dreaded to see, the corpse of my husband, being almost assured he was

dead or wounded. I only looked up once, and then saw a great number of horses at rest, and their riders dismounted. I durst scarcely open my eyes; and hurrying with the constable over that dreaded place, we were soon in Market Street, where, thanking my conductor for his civility, he returned, and I hastened towards Shudehill, where I met one of our people who had heard that my husband was killed. Afterwards I was informed that he was in the Infirmary; another said he was in prison; and then I heard that he was gone home; and soon after I had the pleasure of again re-joining him at Harpurhey, for which mercy I sincerely returned thanks to God."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### AUTHOR'S SECOND ARREST ON A CHARGE OF HIGH TREASON.

ABOUT two o'clock on the morning of Thursday, the 26th of August—that is, on the tenth morning after the fatal meeting—I was awoke by footsteps in the street opposite my residence. Presently they increased in number, and came nearer, and from the manner in which they collected and approached the place, I was convinced a sore trial was at hand for the little woman who lay asleep on my arm, and I felt more concern on her account than on my own.

Bang! bang! came the blows on the door. “Hallo! who's makin' that din at this time o' neet?”

My wife was crying, and all in a tremor, but I cheered her, and told her to be quick, and I would keep them in talk whilst I put on a few things of my own.

“Open the door,” said a voice, authoritatively.

“Open the door”—imitating the voice—“an' hooa arto 'at I should oppen my dur to thee? Theawrt sum drunken eawl or other, or elze theaw wud no' come i' that way.”

“Open the door, or I'll break it,” said the same person.

“Break it wilty? An' hooa art theaw ot tawks o' breakin' into foke's heawses ot dyed oth neet? Theaw'd better not break it, unless theaws an eyyron pot o' the yed.”

There was another bang, and a stout push at the door, but they might as well have shoved against the Rock o' Gibraltar; the door had been firmly propped to prevent a too sudden surprise.

“Will you open the door, man?” said another voice.

"Well, but hooa ar yo' and wot dun yo' want? for thurs moor nor won I yer."

"We are constables, and we want you," was the reply.

"Oh! that's a different thing quite: iv yoor constables yo' shan com in by o' myens. Why didno yo' tell me so at forst?"

By this time both my wife and myself were decently attired, and advancing to the door I took away the prop and shot the bar, and bid them come in, and not soil the silk work in the looms.

A crowd of men entered; it was quite dark, but I learned from the sound of gunstocks on the floor that we had soldiers. My wife was terrified and clung to me. I told her to get a light, and she went towards the door for that purpose, but shrunk back on running against a musket as she groped her way: the constables also repulsed her. They said she must not go out; they would get a light themselves; and in a short time Joseph Platt, one of my former conductors to London, appeared with a candle.

I now perceived that my visitors were a strong posse of police, some soldiers of the 32nd Regiment; Mr. Nadin, the deputy-constable of Manchester; and several officers of infantry and hussars. These seemed interested by the proceedings, and were attentive observers of what took place. The military force consisted of a company of Foot, and as I afterwards learned, a troop of hussars. The officers were no doubt surprised that such a parade should have been deemed requisite for the apprehension of a poor weaver in his cellar. "Well, Mr. Nadin," I said, laying aside my vernacular and speaking common English, "and what may be your pleasure with me now?" He informed me in his usual dogged way, striving to be civil, that he had a warrant against me for high treason. I said if that was the case I was ready to accompany him; but he would never convict me, and if he did, my blood would kill him. He and his assistants then commenced searching the place, for arms, as I thought, on which I ridiculed their simplicity, saying, "And do you think I should keep my depôt here?" One of the men laid hold of



a sugar cane, and asked what that was? I said he might surely see it was a pike shaft, but the head I had removed to another place. I had been expecting them, I said, seven or eight days, and, of course, had made the place as clear as I could for their reception.

The drawers were rummaged; my oaken box was explored; a shawl was spread on the floor, and all my books and papers were bundled into it; there was not, however, anything of consequence; some poems in manuscript had been deposited elsewhere. I took up some of my printed poems, "The Weaver Boy," and would have presented a copy to each of the officers, but Mr. Nadin would not permit me; he took the books and threw them on the heap, and I thought the officers seemed displeased. He then bade one of his men to handcuff me. "Nay, Mr. Nadin," I said, "can this be necessary? I give you my word of honour not to attempt an escape." With a profound oath he bade the man do his duty, and I was chained.

The order was then given to move; my wife burst into tears. I tried to console her, said I should soon be with her again; and bestowing a kiss for my dear child when she came in the morning, I ascended into the street, and shouted, "Hunt and liberty." "Hunt and liberty," responded my brave little helpmate, whose spirit was now roused. One of the policemen, with a pistol in his hand, swearing a deep oath, said he would blow out her brains if she shouted again. "Blow away," was the reply; "Hunt and liberty. Hunt for ever."

Nothing further was said. The soldiers shouldered arms, and the word "March" being given, the prisoner and his escort tramped down the street.

"I thought you very foolish," said a young hussar officer, in a friendly tone at my left elbow. "Why so?" I asked; but before he could reply he was interrupted, and I had not an opportunity for speaking to him again: I supposed he meant something about the books. "Well, but how is this?" I said to Mr. Nadin. "You know I am not in the habit of walking on these excursions; I must have a coach." And

scarcely had we gone many yards ere we came to a coach with the door open, the steps down, and a file of hussars on each side of the road. I stepped into the vehicle, followed by Nadin, one of his men, and a boy; the door was closed and we drove off, accompanied by the trample of horses and the clatter of arms.

With reference to this transaction the London *Times* newspaper—whose information would seem to have been derived from some one upon the spot—said, “The party sent to arrest him consisted of a troop of horse, a detachment of infantry, and a *posse* of constables. To such a formidable force no resistance was offered, nor was there any apparent inclination to resist. The alleged traitor was called up from his bed about four o’clock in the morning, when he little expected to be honoured by such visitors; but he manifested no symptoms of confusion, displeasure, or alarm. He was even good-humoured and jocose with the officers, inspiring them at the same time with a high idea of his talent, coolness, and presence of mind. He first asked why he had been so waited upon, and was told by Nadin that he had a warrant to arrest him. ‘On what charge,’ he rejoined. ‘On charge of having committed a capital felony.’ ‘Ah,’ he replied, ‘you will never convict me; my blood would poison you, man; it is as black as a bull’s blood.’ Seeing the officers search the house for pikes, or pikeheads, he remarked upon their suspicious simplicity, saying, ‘And do you think that I would keep them here?’”

As if this were too good a thing to be given unmutilated, to one of my station, the same paper, as a kind of qualifier, says in another place: “BAMFORD, THE REFORMIST!—This individual, who is now in confinement, charged with seditious practices, was formerly an actor of very considerable repute at Liverpool and other places, and was then in flourishing circumstances. He has since, we understand, procured a scanty subsistence by writing comic songs, and occasionally *jeux d’esprit*, and by trifling benefactions from actors who had formerly known him.”

This, I need not inform my Lancashire readers, was as

unfounded as it was absurd. A hand-loom weaver metamorphosed into "an actor of considerable repute," and then "living by writing comic songs and *jeux d'esprit*," and by "trifling benefactions from actors?" That would indeed have been worse than weaving!

Who ever heard of a play actor becoming a patriot? the one all reality, the other all imitation; the one a reflector only, the other the thing reflected. The writer of that paragraph knew but little of human nature.

As we were ascending the brow at Alkrington, I remarked that it would seem as if Mr. Nadin and myself were destined to be fellow travellers; this was the second trip I had taken with him.

It was, he said; but we should not travel often.

How so? What did he mean?

It was my last journey with him, probably.

Did he think so?

Yes. He was nearly certain I should never return from whence I was going.

Indeed! Why not? What was to be done with me then?

"Thou'll be hanged," he said. "Hanged!" shall I? "Aye! thou'll be hanged at this hurry! Thou'll never come back alive!" Might there not be a small misreckoning in that hanging matter? I said, No! Speaking seriously, he did not think there would. Well! I was not of his opinion. He would find himself mistaken ere long. Did I expect to get off then? I had no doubt about it. And if I did he would give me credit for greater cleverness than he thought I possessed or ever should. He had been in the fish market at Manchester, of course? He had. And had seen live snigs there? He had. And had seen them glide out of the rude grasp of the fishwomen? He had seen that. "Well!" I said, "I am like one of those snigs. I shall slip through your hands this time, whether you will or not: and I hope to do more." What was that? "To assist in bringing to condign punishment some dozen or so of your Manchester magistrates and yeomanry." Psha! I need not speculate on such an event. This would be my last journey up that hill.



The coach stopped at Sam Ogden's at Harpurhey. Nadin got out, and left me, the man, and the boy, guarded by the hussars. After sitting some time the foot soldiers came up; a person or two dressed as gentlemen also appeared. One of them said, "Where is the villain?" The door was opened and I was asked to step out. I did so, and in passing forward to the lobby a blow, or severe push in my neck, nearly flung me on my face. I turned, and saw Mr. Thomas Andrew, of Harpurhey, in an attitude of menace! I shall not repeat the terms in which I addressed him; but I told him that no man, much less a gentleman, would descend to outrage a person in chains—that he had disgraced himself; and that it was well for him—a circumstance he no doubt had calculated on—that my hands were confined. The lobby was filled with soldiers and police, and some one said, "No one should touch the prisoner." Probably it was one of the military, who knew not that this person was brother to the head constable of Manchester.

I was next shown into the kitchen, and took my seat in an old armed chair, in the farther corner near the fireplace. On each side of me was seated a policeman with a pistol in his hand. The infantry piled arms in two or three stacks, and the hussars came in, in turn, whilst others remained on guard. Half a dozen tables were quickly surrounded, and as soon plentifully supplied with oat cake, cheese, and ale; to which the men set with right good will. I told them to make play, and spare nothing, and if no one else would pay the shot I would. They laughed, said I was a hearty fellow, and they wished they might take such a one every night. Of course I and my two policemen replenished to our liking; but our ale was eightpenny, and of a prime tap.

The large bread-flake in the kitchen was speedily unthatched, and about half of a large old cheese disappeared. Pipes were then lighted, more ale was brought, and, being willing to improve our acquaintance, I sung, in my way, that fine old piece known as "General Wolfe's Song," beginning—

"Why, soldiers, why—  
Should we be melancholy, boys?"



The jugs were again replenished, the soldiers were becoming good company, and I said if they were all of my mind we would not march so long as old Sam would chalk up, either for King George or myself. The soldiers asked me to drink with them ; I did so, and gave them a toast. Soon after I was sent for into the bar parlour, and there found the military officers, Mr. Nadin, Mr. Jonathan Andrew, the head constable of Manchester, and his brother. Speaking to the officers, I said they would excuse me, but there was a person in that room to whom no deference whatever would be shown by me, and therefore I should take the liberty to be seated. A few questions were asked, some conversation of no consequence passed, and it seemed to me as if I were sent for more for the purpose of observation than any other thing. At length I was reconducted, and the ale being finished, of which my especial guards had freely partaken, the word to fall in was given, and in a short time we were clattering through the drowsy streets of Manchester. I was first taken to the police office in King Street, and from thence to the prison in Salford. The turnkey appeared, in temper crusty, and half awake ; the door opened and banged to behind me, and the next moment I was ushered into one of the lock-ups.

A close, warm air, tainted with an abominable odour, was the first thing that saluted my senses on entering this wretched place. It was a small cell, perhaps four or five yards in length, by two or three in width, and probably as lofty as it was long. Opposite the door was an aperture to let in a stinted quantity of air ; on two sides of the room were two benches fastened to the wall ; in the centre was a stove with a fire in ; and at a corner on the right was a convenience, from which emanated the disagreeableness first mentioned. Two or three fellows were stretched on the benches ; one was doubled up in a corner, and one lay coiled up like a dog on the floor before the stove ; one of them opened it, flung in some slack, and stirred it, and a light flashed out that showed every corner of that noisome crib, and the persons I was now associated with.

“ In the name of the devil,” demanded he who stood with

what served as a fire-poker in his hand, "what comes here."

"He's e'en a lang un like teseln," said another, a Yorkshireman. "A flash cove," said a third; "he's a smart shirt on!" "He's a fence, or a devout smasher," exclaimed another. "Come, friend, let's have a word of exhortation." "Nay," said one, "that leathern skull-cap looks too priggish. That'll pray none; he'll rap out when he's been afore the beak." "Come, friend, let's be knowing what thou'rt here for," said he with the poker, "we jolly boys, who give life to these palace halls, keep no secrets." "Then let me know my company," I said; "what art thou here for?" "Knives and forks—third appearance—I'm lagged this time." "And what art thou down for?" addressing another. "Oh! mine is only bail, or good behaviour. I knocked a fancy pal down, and thrashed her bully." "And what art thou for?" I asked a third. "Mutton," he said; "a leg of mutton, but it was all a mistake." "Who'll believe it," exclaimed he in the corner; "thou was near being lagg'd last time, and thou goes it now, old boy. we'll both sail together; then it'll be—

"Suppose the duke be short of men,  
What would old England say?  
They'd wish they had those lads again,  
They'd sent to Botany Bay."

He who sung this catch was accused, he said, "of grabbing a purse"; but it was all a mistake, as Bill there said, about the mutton; only who'd believe it, when they couldn't find the other man as did it. "My case, then, is worse than any of yours," I said. "Ah! ah! 'flimsies,'" was the remark—"notes, man, don't you know the proper names of notes? you've been in the note business, I suppose?" "Oh, no, nothing of that sort." "A little in the crack line, perhaps?" "Housebreaking," said another. "No, not that!" "Not on the road, surely?—not in the collecting way?"

'With your loaded pop in hand.'

"No, not an highwayman either, if that is what you mean?" "What the devil are you? Have you robbed a church, and killed a man?" "Worse than either, as the law says." "What have you done?" several now asked in surprise. "My crime is honoured, if it succeed, and the most dreadfully punished if it fail. Hanging, drawing, and quartering is my doom, I understand." "Oh! high treason; aye, high treason; are you one of those Peter's Field pikemen then?" "That is what they say."

One of them now produced an old stump pipe, another some tobacco; they smoked round; their conversation turned on their own affairs; and, becoming drowsy, I stretched myself on one of the benches, and was soon asleep.

When I awoke a peep of dull light was gleaming through the lofty and grated aperture. My companions were, some huddled in drowsiness; others pacing backwards and forwards wearily, breathing the muddled and tainted air; aye, as wearily as do those unfortunate fishes which are doomed to paddle around glass vials, through thick and sickening water, as an ornament to parlour windows; or for the amusement of the lady and her visitors, and the improvement of the young "prodigies" in the study of natural history.

I admire not that philosophy which would go in a coach to see Africa in the next field, nor that religion which requires the wonders of other lands to direct it to "nature's God," which crieth, "bring hither all things, that *I* may learn to adore the Creator;" nor that civilisation which is for ever catching, and caging, and immuring, and tormenting God's noble creatures, and robbing them of their inheritance in the wilds of air, earth, and ocean, for the gratification of a selfish and indolent curiosity, for the promotion of a knowledge which availeth little, and is obtained at the expense of humanity.

Towards noon we were called out of this odious place and taken into the court above for examination, or rather recognition, before the magistrates. My companions were placed in the box commonly allotted to the jury, whilst I was seated at a small desk near the dock, generally occupied by the governor or an assistant.



The magistrate on this occasion was Mr. Norris.

The felony cases were first disposed of, and it went hard against some of my late fellows. One man was afterwards committed for trial for drilling, and several were required to find bail, or sureties, for assaults and other minor offences.

My case, Mr. Norris said, was a most serious one; the charge against me was nothing less than that of high treason. The evidence would not be gone into at present, and I should be brought up for a future examination. I asked, might I be allowed to put a question or two. Certainly. I wished to know who was my accuser? and on what information I had been deprived of my liberty? Mr. Norris said that would be made known to me in due time. I said Mr. Nadin had seized a number of papers and political tracts at my house, and I begged to know who held them, and from whom they would be recoverable? Mr. Norris said the constable who seized them would be responsible: they might become necessary to the ends of justice. That did not satisfy me, I replied. It was possible that other papers might be introduced amongst them, and I wished them to be sealed up, and deposited with a party beyond all suspicion. I was told to be silent; if I uttered any more impertinence I should be committed. I said I understood I was committed. No; I was remanded, and would be brought up on a future day for final examination. The turnkey then tipped me on the shoulder, and I followed him.

My prison was now a pleasant one, compared with the cell I had quitted. To be sure, except my bed, everything around, beneath, and above was of iron or stone, and those are cold comforts; yet on the whole I was agreeably disappointed in the change which had taken place. The walls were very white, the floors were well stoned, my bed seemed very clean, and there was a free current of air, as good as any gentleman in the neighbourhood breathed; and, contrasting this place with the lock-up, I thought I could not wish a better if I were a king. I had also a long airy passage to walk in during the day; and there, pacing backwards and forwards—sometimes studying, sometimes whistling, and sometimes singing—I contrived to pass the hours much more pleasantly



than if I had been locked up with my cell companions. A thinking mind tranquillised by fortitude, with some book reminiscences, especially poetic ones, and some cheerful thoughts of the world outside, need not, indeed never will, give itself up to unavailing regrets because the earthly form which it directs has become circumscribed in its whereabouts. Nature, seeking its ever destined change, through life to death, and through death to another life, must necessarily become aware of the drag on existence which a prison imposes; it cannot be insensible to that, and it will doubtless wish it were removed, but a mind thus constituted need not descend to frivolous complaints.

I might perhaps have some gifts and resources not common to others; and if I had, I made good use of them in my solitary hours; and, grateful for their bestowal, I derived solacements commensurate with their exercise.

I happened to have a kind turnkey here: I think he had formerly known me; he was a Rochdale man, and his name was Grindrod. He found that I was unwell, having a cough, and fulness of the chest; and instead of the prison gruel, he brought me up a basin of warm tea or coffee, morning and evening, from his own table; my dinners were of the prison allowance. Once or twice also my fellow prisoner, James Moorhouse, sent me a little fruit, which I was allowed to receive. My kind gaoler never hinted at remuneration, and it was not without difficulty that, on my going away, I prevailed on him to accept a small gratuity as an acknowledgment of my gratitude.

On the morning of our final examination, which was Friday, the 27th of August, my wife and Joseph Healey's wife came to the prison to see us, if they might be allowed. Mr. Andrews, the late deputy-constable of Bury, with whom I previously had some acquaintance, was at that time connected with the Manchester police, and was on that day in attendance at the New Bailey on business. He saw the two women standing in the crowd outside the gates, and beckoning my wife, asked her if she was come to see me. She said she wished to do so and her companion, who was Healey's wife, wished

also to see her husband. He accordingly took them into a room upstairs, where there was a comfortable fire, seats, and a table. A number of soldiers' wives were about their business, and foot soldiers were walking sentry. Amongst those of the soldiers who passed to and fro was John Hall, a Middleton man, formerly a neighbour of ours, and then a private in the 31st Regiment of Foot. He conversed with them a short time and left them, and soon after reappeared, and set before them a dinner of excellent steak and porter, which was very acceptable at the time. They were, however, not the less unable to account for this, as the table was set out in a style which could not be within the means of a private soldier; but John said nothing: he refused to receive any gratuity, and, having removed the things, he went about his business. They were afterwards ushered into the public court, but it was so crowded as to be insufferable, and, after exchanging a few looks and mute gestures with me and Healey, who were in the dock, they were glad to escape from the crowd and await our disposal in the room they had quitted.\*

From the bar I was conducted to the yard of my former cell, where I was joined by several of the other prisoners, and we were taking what should have been our dinners, when an order suddenly came that we were to prepare to set off for Lancaster Castle. Our meal was soon despatched, and we quickly bundled up our few things. We were then taken to the turnkey's lodge, and each hand-chained, after which we were placed on a four-horse coach, in the inside of which were Mr. Hunt, Mr. Knight, Saxton, and Nadin. The outside party consisted of myself, Swift, Wilde, Healey, and Jones, with a number of constables armed with pistols; we were also escorted by a strong detachment of hussars, and thus, amid the huzzas of an immense multitude, we drove off.

\* At this point Bamford inserts in his narrative an account of the proceedings before the magistrates, taken from the *Times* of August 30, 1819. The Government abandoned the charge of high treason and prosecuted for conspiracy. On this charge the accused were committed, but bail was allowed, Hunt and Johnson each in £1,000, and two sureties in £500; Bamford and the rest in £500, and two sureties of £250. Johnson and Moorhouse found bail at once. Bamford then resumes his narrative.

Proceeding at a rapid pace, we soon left the dim atmosphere, and crowded streets of Manchester and Salford behind. The populous thoroughfares of Pendleton were next traversed, and a pleasant ride of twelve miles brought us to the large town of Bolton, where we changed horses, amid a throng of people, which the hussars found some difficulty in keeping at a distance. But their expressions of sympathy and goodwill were not to be restrained, and their loud shouts of "Hunt for ever!" "Never mind 'em, lads!" "Down with the tyrants!" and a general huzza, with waving of hats and handkerchiefs, and clapping of hands, when we drove off, added to the cheerfulness of our party.

Soon after leaving Bolton darkness came on, and we had scarcely cleared the moors of Horwich, when the coachman, who knew not the way, drove upon a piece of new road, and, endeavouring to extricate himself, the coach began to heel on one side, and we should have gone over—constables, prisoners, and all—had not the pole broken, on which the horses were steadied, and we dismounted, and being most carefully looked to by the constables and soldiers, we walked down to the village of Lower Darwen, and were all snugly counted into a public house there. The poor Jehu, whose mistake had led to the misadventure, then got a large dividend of devil's blessings from our conducting constable.

At this place Mr. Hunt refused to partake of any vinous or fermented liquor, and out of compliment to him most of us did the same. Saxton, however, whose fiery visage told of the indulgence he loved, took brandy and water, and candidly declared that he would not attempt to carry into effect Mr. Hunt's rule of temperance. He would attend a meeting at any time he said, or make a speech, or move or second a resolution for parliamentary reform; but a resolution for a personal reform in the matter of a little cordial he neither could nor would entertain. A discussion ensued which caused some laughter, in which Mr. Hunt joined; and having sat about an hour, the pole was repaired, and we drove into Blackburn, where we left the coach, the driver, and the hussars, and went on with a fresh vehicle and guards.



At Preston we stopped at the head inn, and took supper in a large room, to the lower end of which a number of respectable-looking persons were admitted. These genteel visitors seemed not to have the smallest idea that their presence might be disagreeable to men in our situation, and that a plea of curiosity was likely to seem but an ungracious excuse for coming to view us as they would wild beasts, "at feeding time." The streets here, as at every other town where we stopped, were crowded, and we set off amid loud cheers.

Morning broke betwixt Garstang and Lancaster, and the first challenge of "John O'Gaunt's tower," as it stood out before us in the mild sunlight, excited our attention. It looked indeed like the stern and lordly keep of an old baron, and a small exercise of imagination was sufficient to place in our mind's eye its powerful chieftain, waiting in helmet, cuirass and glaive, beneath its portcullis.

We passed quickly along the streets of the town, the hussars came trotting dusty and choked and weary behind us. It was about five o'clock; few people were stirring, and the clatter of our cavalcade aroused many from their peaceful slumbers. We dismounted at the foot of the castle steep, and walked up accompanied by our guards, and took our station beneath the arch of the grim old gate, the boldness and strength of its masonry attracting our admiration. A blow from the ponderous knocker made the place resound, and in a few minutes the wicket was opened, and we were prisoners in Lancaster Castle.

And now friend reader, since thou hast accompanied me to this my fourth place of confinement, instead of contemplating the repulsive walls, and the dungeon towers, and the massive keep, for which there may be time hereafter, let us, from the eminence of this

"Wide water'd shore,"

mentally cast back our eyes and survey the course by which we have arrived at so undesirable a place. And in doing this, let us not be blind to our own faults, but be simply just towards ourselves as we have been to others. Let us not



spare ourselves the humiliation of blame when deserved, though it do humble our self-esteem, though we have to declare, "this hand hath offended."

In our progress now retrospectively scanned, how great was the portion, as we perceive, of folly which accompanied our good intentions! Groping in a mental and political twilight, we stumbled from error to error, the dim-eyed calling on the blind to follow; we fell as a natural consequence, and a happy circumstance would it have been had our fall served in these later times as a warning to others, but it has not.

"For a nation to be free, it is sufficient that she wills it," and we may add that a nation cannot be free unless she does will it. We thought the will to be free already existed—foolish though—we looked for fruit ere the bloom was come forth; we expected will when there was no mind to produce it, to sustain it; for rational will is the result of mind, not of passion; and that mind did not then exist, nor does it now.

The agitators of the present day, Radicals I may not call them, have suffered greater humiliations than we did. With the example of our disasters before them, they have not avoided one evil which we encountered, nor produced one additional good. On both occasions there was too much of the "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal," but latterly it has been varied by dark counsels and criminal instigations from their own authorised ones. Then followed delegations, and the silly egotism of portraits, and mock-solemn conventions, and formal self-displaying orations, and words and phrases bandied beyond all human entertainment. Next came multitudes deserted of leaders—who stood at a safe distance—and they drove before them a cloud and a whirlwind of terror and confusion, through which were seen flashes, and conflagrations, and blood-streaks; and when it had passed all had vanished, and there remained dungeons, beside whose open gates were weeping wives and children, and prisoners, some victims to their own folly, and some to the wickedness of others, were marching in, chained by scores.

On no! the still small voice of reason has not been listened to now, more than it was formerly. It speaks a language too

pure, too unassuming, too disinterested, for any human crowds that have yet appeared. It requires great sacrifices for the obtainment of great results, a stripping of all vanity, an abandonment of all self, and a cleansing from all lucre. Its appeal could be understood by rare minds only, and they have not been found.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS ON ENTERING LANCASTER CASTLE—DEBTORS' YARD AND DEBTORS—THE ROUND TOWER AND ITS INMATES—ANOTHER PRISON WARD—COMFORTABLE ANTICIPATIONS—A SLEEPING CELL—AUTHOR'S HORRIBLE SENSATIONS ON BEING LOCKED IN—HENRY HUNT AND JOHN KNIGHT BAILED.

OUR arrival seemed scarcely to have been expected so early as it took place, for it was not until we had waited some time between the inner and outer gates that a young man, who we afterwards found was the governor's son, made his appearance without coat, and with other indications of a hurried dressing. Having perused the documents presented by Nadin, and cast a hasty but observant glance at his prisoners, he conducted us into the debtors' yard, where we were greeted with a shout and many good wishes and shaking of hands by some debtors who were abroad. A very brief reconnoitre was sufficient for the settlement of any doubts as to the place being a most excellent one for safe detention. All around were high and frowning barriers of masonry, and we felt as completely shut in from the world as if we were at the bottom of a great well, where neither force, nor art, nor supplication, were of any avail. On our right were high and smooth walls, capped by movable spikes, threatening impalement to any wight whom a desperate good fortune enabled to ascend there. At regular distances were strong prison towers containing sleeping cells; a little more in our front stood the huge gloomy mass known as "John O'Gaunt's tower," which looked like a pile hewn square from the solid rock. At the top of the yard, and on

our left, were the habitations of the debtors, with their small windows all looking down into the great well; whilst from the casements and crib-looking loop-holes some of the poor fellows stood clapping hands and waving night caps, as if they really thought that a welcome to such a place must be as gratifying as to any other, and that a welcome was a compliment anywhere.

We were conducted from hence to the first criminal ward on our right, the tower of which is, I believe, called the round tower. Here we found several prisoners, and amongst them an attorney from Manchester, and his clerk, who had each been sentenced to three years' imprisonment for falsely swearing to a debt against my former fellow prisoner, Joseph Sellers. Their time was nearly out, but the old attorney was apparently hastening fast to another world. He lay in one corner on the floor doubled up, and in dreadful agonies from pains in his bowels and limbs; the latter caused by rheumatism. This place was very inconvenient, cold, and comfortless. A continued draught of wind brought the smoke down the chimney, and we were all coughing and nearly blinded. Soon after we were removed into the next ward but one, towards the round-house, and there we were comparatively at home, having a much better day-room and yard, and besides those amendments we were all together, without any admixture with other prisoners, and were consequently at liberty to converse freely amongst ourselves.

There were a good kettle and pan in the day-room, and good water in a pump in the yard; we sent into the town for other kitchen requisites, as plates, knives, forks, and such articles; also for bread and butter (until our prison allowance was given us), tea, coffee, and other grocery matters, and having a fire in the place, we soon contrived to make a good breakfast, and were quite merry over it. At dinner we fared no worse; we sent out for whatever we wanted, ales and liquors excepted; the prison allowance of vegetables and soup was in part used by us, and the remainder we gave to a felon, who was allowed to come in and clear our day-room and cells every morning. The day passed off pretty agreeably, but



towards evening Hunt gave way to fits of impatience because no one appeared to bail him. He in particular inveighed against Johnson for having, as he said, invited him down to Manchester, got him into that trouble, and then abandoned him. Sooner, he said, than he would have done as Johnson had done by him—sooner than he would have walked home at liberty, and left his friend and guest in prison—he would have had his arm torn from his body. Mr. Hunt generally made use of the strongest terms he could at the moment command, and to those of us who had frequently been in his company, exhibitions of violent feeling were by no means new. He had not the candour to reflect that Mr. Johnson could not better serve us than by first securing his own liberty, as a means towards furthering ours, which in this case I believe he did.

Night came, and the rattle of keys informed us that we were about being introduced to our sleeping berths. We had our choice, and Mr. Hunt took the cell next the door. I, at his desire, went to the next, as he said he could call to me if he should be unwell, and John Knight went into the third; the others of our party were lodged in the cells above. During the day, which turned out rather fine and clear, I had imbibed a favourable opinion of this prison. The day-room and yard were clean and airy, and whilst the attendant was sweeping out the cells and making the beds, I had gone in and found them with their doors all open, lighted with the forenoon sun, and as white and sweet as a constant application of quick-lime could make them. The cells were perhaps eight feet in width, by ten or twelve in length, and seven or eight upwards. Over a very strong door of wood—I think with clamped nails—was a square aperture for the admission of air; on the other side the door was the passage—beyond it again was a massive iron grating, and the entrance to the passage was also secured by another door, of, I think, iron. At the head of the cell was an iron slab, full of perforations, and resting on projections from the wall; a sack with straw in, a couple of blankets or so, and a good horse-rug, made up our bed, and the whole being apparently clean, I promised myself a sleep as sound as a king could enjoy in his cups. A capital prison thought I,

and a strong one too, and though it kept one from rambling out, it would also keep the storms from coming in, as I should find should I have to spend a winter or two within its shelter. Besides, I had heard that these felon-dungeons were constructed under the direction of the celebrated "humane Howard," therefore they must be the very best for comfort as well as security, and, as I said before, I, from their daylight appearance and these considerations, thought well of my domicile. But in those days I always looked at things on their brightest side.

We turned in, and my door had not been many minutes closed ere I began to feel as if I were being smothered. My old complaint on the lungs had gone with me to this place, and though I constantly was cheerful, very stubborn fits of coughing had convinced me that I was far from being well. I now began to feel as if I was closed up in a coffin, and not a breath of air above and around me. How dreadful were my sensations! I can never forget them. My chest heaved for air, but the cooling, life-giving stream came not, and I stood leaning on my bed, pumping and gasping in the close, suffocating den. I thought of the Black Hole of Calcutta, and concluded that the fate of its sufferers would be mine. I thought of getting up to the air-hole, but it was above my reach, and there was not anything in the place I could put my feet upon, else I should have deemed it luxury to have stood inhaling the blessed fluid all night. Oh! humanity, humanity, I thought, what is the humanity which builds prisons on such plans as these? I endeavoured to tranquillise my mind for the sustainment of this trial, and I found the effort was not made in vain. I was now coughing, and had burst into a profuse perspiration, and sitting on my bed, I felt a breath of air waft coolly and gratefully on my dewy forehead. I then knelt on the bed, and being more on a level with the air-hole, I thanked God for the relief afforded by a more plentiful supply of the heaven-breathed element. Soon after I got cooler my coughing became less frequent, and I lay down on the bed with my clothes on, promising myself a sound repose during the remainder of the night. I had not dropped asleep

when the rattling of keys was again heard, the outer door was unlocked, lights glanced in the lobby, and the names of Hunt and Knight were pronounced ; bail had arrived for them, they were called from their cells, and Hunt bidding me "good night," and saying he would be with us again in the morning the door was banged to and locked, the light departed, and I was soon in a peaceful sleep. I afterwards, so long as I continued here, slept in Hunt's cell, but it was no better than the others ; all were exactly the same as to dimension and the too great exclusion of air.

The doors were thrown open in good time the next morning, and after we had all washed at the pump we were subjected to the prison rule of examination as to whether we were infected by cutaneous disease. Some of our party felt indignant at this, considering it a degradation ; but I, who remembered the unpleasant discovery at Coldbath Fields, approved of it, reflecting that it was impossible to keep the inmates of a large prison in a clean and healthy state without daily examination. Our breakfast consisted of milk, coffee, and bread-and-butter, and I may as well mention here that the prison allowance of gruel, bread, potatoes, soup, and butcher's meat, were henceforward regularly dealt out to us ; a small quantity of butter, I think to each man, was also given us twice a week in common with the other prisoners, but half of this was afterwards disallowed and cheese substituted, by order of the visiting magistrates.

The daily routine of a pent-up life such as we led could not afford much variety of incident. We were all—now that Hunt and Knight were gone—young men and full of life and spirits. We chatted, sung, told stories, had hopping and leaping matches, and walked in the yard ; we sometimes also wrote letters, and when one arrived from a wife or a friend the lucky wight would retire aside and read it by snatches and morsels, lest it should be too soon done ; newspapers were also permitted to pass, and we received one or more daily. Hunt and Knight also came to the round-house the morning after they were bailed, and then set off for Manchester to make preparations against the day on which we should have to plead.



Meantime we continued to make ourselves as easy as possible. The doctor came to see me and gave me a mixture, which did me some good, but I obtained the greatest relief at night by standing or kneeling on my bed, and inhaling the stream of air as it flowed in. On some nights, when my cough was rather merciful, I found amusement in composing, as at Coldbath Fields, bits of rude verse, like the following:—

“ Here is no repining,  
Every heart is true and steady.  
Here is no declining,  
Still for England’s service ready.  
Here is not a tear shed,  
Such a weakness we disdain it.  
Here is not a bow’d head,  
Sign of sorrow, we refrain it.  
The more the cruel tyrants bind us,  
The more united they shall find us.”

This verse pleased my companions exceedingly, and it afterwards became of some celebrity amongst the reformers.

One day James Murray, who was so dreadfully beaten at the White Moss, and one Heiffor, a barber from Manchester, were introduced into our yard by one of the turnkeys. They came for the purpose of looking us over, and identifying any of us who might have been present at that outrage, but, fortunately, none of our party happened to be on the Moss that morning, and none of us were ever sworn to as having been there; at least neither of these two visitors swore to any of us. After viewing us some time, during which not a word was interchanged, they went away. We remarked that persons frequently came upon the round-house and on the great tower to look at us, and as we knew some of them were not our friends we afterwards made it a rule to walk into the day-room and shut the door the moment we noticed any such observers. We also made it a rule to sing “The Lancashire Hymn” every evening before locking-up time. We closed the door of our day-room during this piece of devotion—for we always sung in the true spirit of devotion—and surprised, at first, our almost insensible turnkeys by the awakening of tones of sublime and



heart-stirring music. We were sometimes taken out to pump water, and that was a little variation from our dull life; it afforded us opportunities for practical joking and some laughter. We went to chapel on prayer days and Sundays, and were also pleased with a trip to the great tower, where our heights were taken by a standard measure, and a description of our hair, eyes, complexions, and external marks, was carefully noted down in a book, and may there, probably, be found to this day should any of my learned and searching readers wish to consult it.

One morning Sir Charles Wolseley, Hunt, Mr. Thomas Chapman, of Manchester, and other friends, called us down to the round-house, and after some congratulations, and hearty shaking of hands, they informed us that several bills of indictment which had been presented against certain individuals of the Manchester yeomanry corps, had been thrown out by the grand jury, whilst all the indictments preferred against our party had been returned true bills. They also informed us that the proceedings of the magistrates and yeomanry at Manchester had caused a strongly indignant feeling throughout the nation; that the public press had very handsomely taken up the affair; and that we needed not to fear being deserted in our struggle, for friends were coming from all parts to give bail for us. Mr. Hunt put into my hand a copy of the *London Times*, in which was set forth an account of my arrest at Middleton, as already quoted. Sir Charles had also seen my dear wife and child, and in compliment to the spirited conduct of the former, on the above occasion, he had made her a present of a one pound bank-note, for which kindness I sincerely thanked him, and felt relieved from some apprehensions lest they might be distressed whilst I was at this place; indeed, we were all tranquillised by an assurance that our families would be protected during our absence from home. This, if I recollect aright, was the first time I had ever exchanged a word with Sir Charles, and it seemed I was destined to know him only for his kindness, many instances of which he afterwards gave me, as will probably appear in the course of this my narrative. He was

one of the few who dared to be honest in the worst of times, who marched with the van of freedom against English misrule. May happiness attend his latest moment of consciousness, and may his name be ever cherished in many hearts as it is in mine!

Mr. Harmer, solicitor, of London, with Mr. Dennison, of Liverpool, also called to see us. Mr. Pearson, who, as we understood, was to be our legal manager in the case, was frequently at the gate, and what with the attentions of friends, and our own resources, we contrived to lead a much more worldly mannered life than might have been thought possible in such a place.

One day the iron gate at the round-house was thrown open, and a number of gentlemen entered and walked up the yard into the day-room, where most of us were at the time; we were given to understand they were "the grand jury," the same men who had found the indictments true against us, and had cut those against the magistrates and yeomanry. They looked at the place and at us some time, but mostly at us; we also eyed them pretty closely, but no civilities passed; in truth, we had none to spare; and it was quite as much as we could do to refrain from reproaching them in words. That, to be sure, would have been a sad breach of the irresponsibility which hedges our English juries, but it would have been quite natural, and might have come with a not monstrously bad grace from men in our situation, and treated as we had been. There was perhaps enough said in our looks; they gazed at us till I suppose they could guess what we would say, and then they went back, and in reply they stopped half our butter! One of our young fellows, Swift, I think, was devouring a wedge of bread-and-butter when they entered, and as he had not the manners, or the cunning, to put it aside, but kept biting and chewing, and anon looking most wolfishly towards their honours and worships, that circumstance perhaps suggested the propriety and the expediency and the "high and imperative duty" of "stopping our butter."

When the time comes that the grand jury system shall be abolished, or greatly modified in England, the conduct of these

gentlemen in the bills affair—not the butter—will be quoted as one very strong authority for the change.

At length the day came when we were to appear before the court, to plead to the indictments found against us. The turnkeys conducted us through the round-house, through another yard, through a part of the great tower and into a long room at the back, which at this time was lighted by a lamp or two, casting a pale but distinct gleam through the place. Here we were told to wait, and there being a bench or two in the place, we were at liberty to sit if we chose it. I, however, preferred looking about me, and soon espied a man, not of our party, who was seated on one of the benches. This room, I should inform my reader, was, as I afterwards learned, termed “the sweating-room”; it was the room in which prisoners waited until called for trial, and to which they were, in the first instance, conducted after trial; it was therefore indeed fitly named. How many hundreds of victims—some doubtless innocent—had there sweated until their hearts were sick? The one before me was an example to the point; he sat near the light and I remarked him well. His dress and general appearance were those of a respectable country shopkeeper or small farmer. He seemed to be about forty years of age, his hair a little grey, and smoothed decently, but not affectedly, on his brow. His coat was drab and of the plain country cut; one of those good but old-fashioned purple and spotted silk handkerchiefs was around his neck, and his shirt collar, which was turned down, looked so plain and white, that my imagination reverted to his comfortable country home. He sat with his hands clasped betwixt his knees, and his looks directed intensely, but calmly, towards a door in another part of the room. The sweat stood in big, bright drops on his forehead, so big, that they broke into each other and trickled down his face. Then he would wipe his brow, and soon again it would be clustered with the perspiration. He came from some country place near Bolton, and had just been tried for the then capital crime of passing forged bank-notes, and acquitted; another indictment, however, lay against him, and he was waiting to be again conducted into court,



"He is an old offender," said our turnkey, "and if it goes against him this second time he may say his prayers—nothing can save him."

"But surely," I said, "if he only escapes this once more, he will never give you a chance of having him here again?"

"I rather think he will get off," he said; "the old judge seems not very fond of these things; but then he'll be here again, he's well known, he cannot keep out of it."

"Has he ever been taken before?" I asked. "No," replied the turnkey; "but they have had their eyes on him some time, and it's well known he's done a deal in the note line. He might as well go up and be cast now," he continued—"it will only give us trouble another time. We're sure to have him. When once they get properly into the note business, they never give over till it's too late."

The door from the interior opened, a person entered, and speaking to our conductor, we were motioned to go forward. We descended some steps, and passed along a subterranean passage, nearly dark, at the further end of which the light increased, and we could hear voices, and a kind of confused hum above. In a few minutes a man was handed down some steps into the passage by another, who held his arm; the former appeared to be in distress. They passed to the room from whence we had come, and our guide motioning us to advance, we mounted the steps, and found ourselves in an oblong box or compartment, mounted by iron spikes, in a large crowded place, lighted by numerous lamps and chandeliers, and with hundreds of eyes gazing upon us. The spectacle was certainly calculated to inspire us with awe and alarm; our sudden transition from a scene of gloom and wretchedness to one of light and splendour produced a momentary confusion of mind—a vacant wonder and uncertainty as to what all this could mean. One moment, however, and a glance around was sufficient to recall the mind to its duty; and then, whilst the ear was listening, the eye was observing, and the memory receiving impressions which have never yet been erased.

In the box where we stood were, besides ourselves, several



officers of the prison; the deputy-governor—the young gentleman who received us at the gate—stood in a small space on one side; behind us, but separated from our box, was a packed mass of human beings, with javelin men in their liveries, and their glittering weapons. On our right was a large pew or compartment, crowded with well-dressed persons; before us, and somewhat elevated, sat the judge, a man of venerable years, clothed in a long robe of bright scarlet and ermine, with a flowing white wig, and a countenance of rough, blunt mould; a look like that of a surly old lion, at once stern, wilful, and magnanimous—this was the venerable Baron Wood.

On the bench with him were several gentlemen and ladies, probably the sheriff and his friends; all the space on the left was equally crammed, and the galleries on each side were crowded with elegantly attired females, who, I flattered myself, seemed generally to be prepossessed in our favour. On the floor, betwixt us and the judge, was a large table, covered with green cloth, on which lamps were burning, and books, papers, and writing apparatus were confusedly distributed; around the table were a number of barristers in their costume: some writing, some conversing, and others observing us. Hunt, Moorhouse, Johnson, and Knight, were in the space near the table, on the judge's right. Sir Charles Wolseley, Mr. Chapman, Mr. Harmer, Mr. Dennison, Mr. Pearson, and a number of other friends, were near them, and every other inch of the floor was occupied. A number of reporters for the metropolitan and county press were also there, plying their ready pencils; and it is probable that the description of this scene, which some of those gentleman sketched on the spot, might, if now consulted, display a more correct and striking picture of the group than the present one drawn from memory alone.

Mr. Littledale, who on this occasion acted for the Government, requested that the indictment might be read, and it was accordingly read by the clerk of the arraigns. It stated that the prisoners, being persons of a wicked and turbulent disposition, did on the first day of July, conspire and agree together to excite tumult and disturbance: and that they did,

on the 16th day of August, unlawfully, maliciously, and seditiously, assemble together, and cause others to assemble, to the number of sixty thousand, in a formidable and menacing manner, with sticks, clubs, and other offensive weapons; with banners, flags, colours, and placards, having divers seditious and inflammatory inscriptions, and in martial array; and did on the said 16th of August, make great tumult, riot, and disturbance; and for half an hour unlawfully and riotously did continue assembled, making great tumult and disturbance, contrary to the peace of our Sovereign Lord, the King, &c., &c.

Each of us pleaded "Not Guilty," and elected to traverse until the next assizes. The judge proposed naming the amount of our bail in a few days; but after being respectfully urged, with sundry good reasons, for an immediate determination, he mentioned ourselves in £200, and two sureties, each in £100, as the amount of recognisance which would be required on behalf of us who were in custody. We were then re-conducted to our old quarters, and our fellow defendants on bail departed into the town with their friends.

I may as well mention that the poor fellow we had seen in the sweating-room was again put to the bar the same night, to answer an indictment for uttering another note of the same parcel as the one for which he had been acquitted belonged to, but in consequence of the strong observations of the worthy judge, who held this was a part of the transaction for which he had been already tried, the man again got off. I believe no evidence was tendered. If I am not mistaken in the person, however, he was soon after apprehended for a like offence, and the predictions of the turnkey were verified.

On Tuesday, the 17th of September, we were again brought up to put in bail. Hunt, Knight, Johnson, and Moorhouse, were each bound in £400, and two sureties, in £200 each; and the conditions were that we should severally appear on the first day of next session of Oyer and Terminer, to answer the indictment which had been read. All the required forms having now been complied with, Sir Charles Wolseley and Mr. Chapman becoming my sureties, we were discharged from custody; and after some show off by Mr. Hunt, without

which indeed he scarcely knew how to get out of any matter, we left the dock, and went with our friends to an inn in the town, where we took a frugal repast, and remained for the night.

The observant reader will have noted that we were sent from the New Bailey to Lancaster Castle, because we had not sureties ready to give bail with us. Now suppose a catastrophe like that of St. Peter's Field was by any means to take place in Manchester in these days, does not the reader feel assured that no ten honest labouring men would be allowed to be dragged off for want of bail? I am of opinion that now gentlemen in great numbers and of vast wealth would come forward without the slightest appeal from the prisoners, and tender themselves as sureties for the fulfilment of the law. Such, if my view be correct, is the great change which has taken place since the year 1819; and should not this change, which is only one of many that are and have been working vast alterations for the better in men's thoughts and feeling, encourage us to hope that even without tumult, or violence, or destruction of property, or oppression of person, all that is requisite for the redemption of our native country will in due time be ours if we can only have patience to rest upon reason, and eschew violence? Some are in the habit of shouting "No Surrender!" but I say we should all surrender; we should surrender our passions, and our prejudices, and our uncharitableness towards others. We should seek to win as much as we can from the common humanity of our adversaries. The good and the wise will pursue this course, and they will succeed, whilst the treacherous, the arrogant and the intolerant will dwindle far behind in the march, and will perish of self-contention, instead of coming up to win the laurels.

It had been arranged that we should all travel the country back from Lancaster in a four-horse stage coach. One belonging to Moorhouse, which had conveyed some of our friends to Lancaster, was accordingly selected, and in it and upon it we left Lancaster on the morning after our liberation. Some very inflated and bombastic accounts of this progress, if I may so call it, appeared in several publications of those



times, but, as it is not my wish either to give a reprint of exaggerations, or to detract from the real honour of our triumph by a wreath of tinsel, I must leave such statements as I find them in the prints of the day. The morning turned out to be as fine a one as any holiday folks could wish. We were cheered by rather large crowds in the streets of Lancaster, breakfasted at Garstang, and on approaching Preston, we fell in with multitudes of people, numbers of whom carried handsome flags and banners, some with the words, "Hunt and Liberty," and various other matters. From Preston to Blackburn the crowds increased, and our passage through the latter town was more prolonged, and the shouts louder than before. From Blackburn to Bolton we were, I believe, drawn the whole of the way, and the honest and simple-hearted country weavers seemed to think no labour, no distinction too great for the persecuted travellers. At Bolton we were similarly welcomed; Mr. Hunt and Mr. Pearson each addressed a dense crowd from the windows of the Swan Inn. We stopped at Bolton all night, and went towards Manchester on the morning of Thursday, the 9th of September. On arriving at Pendleton the crowds became immense, and we approached the town at a very slow pace. Several stand coaches, containing friends who had come out to meet us, here joined the procession. The spectacle now was calculated to produce feelings of surprise, and perhaps of pleasure; but any feelings of that sort were saddened in my breast by seeing all this fine energy cast like flowers at the feet of one who I now began to suspect was excessively egotistical; and I almost doubted whether he who loved himself so well could ever really love his country for its own sake; whether one of such a nature could be expected to remain faithful, if, from any change of circumstances, his country no longer yielded the incense to his self love, for which his whole heart seemed to beat. But I was amused, as well as a little humiliated, by what was continually occurring near me. Hunt sat on the box-seat; I sat immediately behind him, and the other defendants were disposed of as suited convenience. Moorhouse stood on the roof of the coach, holding by a rope which



was fastened to the irons at each side. He had kept that position all the way from Bolton, I am not quite certain whether or not from Blackburn. Hunt continually doffed his hat, waved it lowly, bowed gracefully, and now and then spoke a few kind words to the people; but if some five or ten minutes elapsed without a huzza or two, or the still more pleasing sound, "Hunt for Ever!" "Hunt for Ever!" he would rise from his seat, turn round, and, cursing poor Moorhouse in limbs, soul, or eyes, he would say, "Why don't you shout man? Why don't you shout? Give them the hip, — you, don't you see they're fagging?" Moorhouse himself was fagging; he would, however, wipe his forehead and face, which were as red as a kiln, and waving his hat, and raising his voice, now become perfectly hoarse, he would "hip, hip," and the third "hip," was generally drowned in a loud huzza, accompanied by the afore-mentioned exclamation, now become so grateful to the ears of our leader. He would then resume his seat, the bowing and hat-waving went on as before; we had a little calm, and advanced a short distance; Moorhouse was again reminded, and the many-throated voice again yielded the words of acclamation. At times I had some difficulty to avoid laughing in Hunt's face; at times I was vexed at being a party in such a piece of little vanity; I contrasted all this glare and noise with the useful results of calm, sober thought, and silent determination, and I made up my mind that, when once out of this, I would not in future be any party in such trumpery exhibitions; in the unworthy setting up of the instrument instead of the principle of a great cause. To this resolution I have, I think, been faithful; and though I have been, and still may be blamed, it is not likely that I shall ever depart from the rule.

We arrived at Smedley, and were all hospitably received by Mr. and Mrs. Johnson. At length I got away, and with my wife on my arm, and my little girl holding my hand, I was once more happy in traversing by hedge-sides, with their autumnal hues, towards that lowly home from which thirteen days before I had departed under such different circumstances.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

OLDHAM INQUEST—REPORTERS EXCLUDED—PETER FINNERTY—  
CONDY, ROSS, AND OTHERS—AUTHOR CORRESPONDS WITH  
THE PRESS.

I SHALL not pretend to enter into anything like a general history of those times, but shall content myself with stating events which more or less affected my own concerns. The inquest on John Lees, at Oldham, commonly called the Oldham inquest, was the next transaction of importance, as connected with our unfortunate meeting. I was without work, and so I put a pencil and some paper into my pocket and went to Oldham, with a view to copy such parts of the evidence as, in my opinion, might be useful in the ensuing trial in which I should have to take a share. The inquest was held in the large room of the Angel Inn. The reporters for several London journals had been put out of the room for persisting in furnishing daily reports contrary to the coroner's order, and a rather strict supervision was held over the other reporters, both for the London and provincial press, lest they should trespass in like manner; a few reporters only were therefore admitted, and I took my seat beside them, and noted down very expertly, for a first effort, a good deal of the evidence which was given on that day. At one time there was a general clearing out amongst the reporters—several had got in, and were taking notes as usual; the coroner therefore ordered them out, and Mr. Barnes, editor of the *Times*, Mr. Ross, and Mr. Condy were expelled, as was also Mr. Finnerty, of the *Morning Chronicle*. The coroner asked who I was, and on my explaining to him my motive for attending and taking notes, he said no more, and I remained one of the

privileged few. A short time before this, whilst perambulating the streets of Manchester in search of work, I was going down Bridgewater Place, when a gentleman threw up a window of the Bridgewater Inn, then the head inn of the town, and called me by name. It was Mr. Pearson, our attorney, and he, finding I was at liberty for a short time, asked me in and introduced me to Mr. Finnerty, who was stopping there; and thus I became personally known to that rather remarkable man. I had previously learned somewhat of his history from several passages in "Cobbett's Register." He had suffered under the government of Castlereagh in Ireland, had been convicted of a libel in England, and had gone through a long imprisonment for it in Lincoln Castle.

When I came out of the room at the inquest Mr. Finnerty, profiting by his accidental knowledge of me, asked me into a room, and with much ease and perfect self-possession—in neither of which was he seldom deficient—he inquired what I had been doing at the inquest, and on my producing my notes he slapped me on the shoulder, and continued, "Ah! Bamford, my dear fellow, you must let me have the loan of those notes. You will, I know—won't you, now?" I said I could not spare them; they would be of service to me on my trial. "Ah! and is it the thrial you're dreaming about? Niv'r disthress yourself on that account, man: you'll all be well taken care of. Why, isn't there Harmer here, and Pearson, our friend, and Hunt, himself a host? Ah! my dear friend, you needn't be bothering your head about the thrial yit. You could let me have the notes, you know, and get them back in print—they'll do you honner, boy! and, hear ye now, I'll pay you for your throuble." I refused to part with my notes, to the evident chagrin and disappointment of my new friend, who eyed me with his peculiar owl-like squint and paraded to and fro in fretful mood. I, however, kept my writings, and went home; and in a day or two I received a note requesting me to call on him at the Bridgewater Arms. I did so, and the result was that I agreed to attend the inquest on his account, and to furnish him with notes and verbal communications for the *Morning Chronicle*.



I accordingly attended at Oldham during several days, and afterwards at the Star Inn, Manchester, until the proceedings were quashed on the alleged ground of an improper interference with the jury. And thus commenced my first correspondence with the public press.

Mr. Hunt, it would seem, had been taken with a horror of Lancashire juries and Lancashire gaols. Nothing would satisfy him save a removal of the trial to another county, and in accordance with his pressing solicitations myself and the other co-defendants joined him in an application for a removal; and, after a hearing before the judges, the application was acceded to, and the cause ordered for trial at the next Spring Assizes at York.

Seeing, as I suppose, that I was pretty active with my pen, and had, besides, rather more than a mere countryman's share of ready information, Mr. Finnerty intimated that if I were in London he could procure an engagement for me at the *Morning Chronicle* office. Mr. Pearson approved of the idea, and was almost sure that something for my advancement in society would offer if I were only at the metropolis. Sir Charles Wolseley entirely coincided, but, whether I went to London or not, he should be glad at any rate to have me as his guest during a week or fortnight at Wolseley Bridge. These flattering prospects determined me, and a day or two after Mr. Finnerty had left Manchester I arrived by the coach at Wolseley Arms Inn, Wolseley Bridge. During the supper, which the coach passengers took together, a London reporter before mentioned and a tradesman from Manchester, who shortly afterwards became bankrupt, made, as I thought, some too-free allusions to the parts which Sir Charles Wolseley and Mr. Finnerty had been acting in the Manchester affair, and to their political conduct generally. I remained silent some time, until I perceived a look directed towards me. I then said it was a pity the two gentlemen they had been making free with were not present, but if they would stop whilst a message was sent to the hall I had no doubt they would soon come over and give the talkers whatever explanation they chose to ask to their face. My sentiment was approved of by several at the table,



and especially by one gentlemanly looking man, who I thought would have been with the other party. "John," I said to the waiter. "Yes, sir." "Can you step to the hall, and——" "Coach, gemmen! Coach, coach!" said the driver at the door; and in a trice the two respectable backbiters had left the room, when I and several other of the passengers enjoyed a laugh at their expense.

The next morning I went over to the hall, and found Finnerty quite comfortably domiciled. Lady Wolseley was in the straw upstairs, so that Sir Charles had much of his own way below. Friend Finnerty, now that he had the run of a splendid suite of apartments, attendance of servants, and all hospitalities, was also somewhat changed in his manner. His place was in the parlour with Sir Charles; mine in the housekeeper's room, with the occasional company of that amiable, respectable, and well-informed lady. I dined with her in the servants' hall, and took my other meals in her apartment, in company with her, the lady's maid (a joking, smiling, and modest young girl), and a Monsieur something, the French cook. I lived pretty agreeably amongst my kindhearted new acquaintance, yet at times I could not prevent gloomy sensations from pressing on my mind. Finnerty had become quite condescending, for which I could not prevail on myself to feel thankful. Sir Charles was always kind and affable, without pretension, but still I could not but feel that in his house I was only a very humble guest. I had read how "an Ayrshire ploughman" had once been deemed good company for a Scottish duchess, but I found that the barriers of English rank were not to be moved by "a Lancashire weaver," though he could say, "I also am a poet," and, quite as much as the Scottish bard, a patriot also. I lodged at the inn, and often on mornings would I stroll out solitarily to look at the deer on the moorlands. Those majestic and beautiful animals would toss their proud antlers, gaze a moment in surprise, as if they also knew I was a stranger, and,

"Stretching forward free and far,  
Seek the wild heaths."

Sometimes I rambled through the town of Rugeley, but I knew not any one there, nor did any one know me, and my visits consequently yielded but little social intercourse. Often would I saunter through the secluded and quiet village of Colton, but I knew not then that such a man as Walter Savage Landor existed, and if I had I am not certain that I should have ventured to knock at his door. The little village of College, or Col-edge, with its church, the banks of the Trent, and the grounds about Wolseley Hall, were often the objects of a contemplation which was continually wandering to other scenes. Several times I went with Monsieur to shoot rabbits, but I killed none, and was more likely to be shot myself; twice I walked across my comrade's fire, and the pellets came peppering about my legs. I was thinking of other things, wearied, but not ungrateful, out of place, and "out of gearing," as the mechanists would say.

At length the glad morning came when an end was to be put to this. I was to go with Finnerty to London, with a gig and horse, which Charles Pearson had left at Stafford, I think, on his way down to Lancashire. Sir Charles made me a present of two pounds; Finnerty took the whip, and bidding good morn to our worthy host, we drove slowly from Wolseley Hall.

We passed through Rugeley, Mavesyn Ridware (Malvoisin, one of the heroes of "Ivanhoe"), and along a rural country of farm-steads, clustered cottages, and other sights of profitable industry. I soon thought Finnerty was but an indifferent driver, he could not get the mare to go; he kept lashing, stamping on the bottom of the gig, hissing, and calling "go-long," but the tit did not quit the ground. She would trot a little down a slope or on a short level; but there was no speed nor any continuation. I often got out to ease her on the ascents, for I did not like to have my weight lashed out of her, but still there was little amendment; she could not get to a pace much more keep one; in fact she spoke by her manner, as plainly as a dumb beast could speak, "I cannot do it, gentlemen,—I would freely, if I could, but I have not the work in me. I am done, I am old!" I soon framed this ad-

dress for her in my mind, and repeated it to my fellow traveller, who said it was not so ; she had been starved by some rascally ostler, and a warm mash or two would bring her round. He, however, withheld his whip rather more, until her pace became a creep, when again he would give her a cut or two, stamp, hiss, and lash again, and make up the lost lashes by as many imprecations against the "scoundrelly ostlers." I was right, however ; had she been fit for work it is not likely that Charles Pearson would have left her.

I began to be amused by the manner of my fellow traveller, and I thought better of him for laying the blame anywhere save on the dumb beast. I soon found that he wished me to be a useful companion on the road that is, a kind of half cad, and half comrade ; and, as I really thought he had much goodness at heart, I felt disposed to humour him in all his bearable caprices.

At Litchfield, Finnerty spent an hour in looking at the cathedral, whilst I looked after the mare at the inn. At Birmingham, which we reached tardily, we dined, gave the mare a good feed, and after resting two hours my friend, unexpectedly by me, gave the word to proceed, and, with reluctance on my part, for I thought the beast had done enough for that day, we went on to some road-side inn, about nine miles further, where we got down and the jaded thing was released and put into a warm stable. On looking over the luggage, it was discovered that a new silk umbrella, which Finnerty had bought at Manchester, was missing. He went into a passion, and stormed with all the wordiness and gesticulation for which his countrymen are remarkable ; whilst I, sometimes provoked, sometimes amused, sat coolly and smoked a pipe until supper was ready. He laid all the blame on me ; he expected I would have seen that the luggage was safe ; he had trusted all to me, and was thus disappointed, like a fool as he was, for troubling himself about other people's welfare. He was sure it had been left at Birmingham, and it was my neglect in not putting it in the gig ; and then again he repeated what it had cost him—two pounds, I think.

When I could get a word in, I reminded him of its being in



his hand at a certain part of the road we had just come, on which he acknowledged that it was so ; but he said he put it in on my side, and I, no doubt, had suffered it to slip down by the apron. I was of the same opinion, that it had slipped out of the gig, but I defended myself from all blame as to its loss, proffering, however, to go back in the morning, and see if I could find it. This rather pacified him, and we got supper, but his philosophy had been too sorely tested, and when we parted for the night he was in very bad humour. I got up early next morning, and went back on the road about four miles, looking at every rut by the way, but nothing could I see of the umbrella ; as I returned I inquired at several places, but nothing could I hear of it. He was at breakfast when I got to the inn, and on making known the bad result of my search the "fat was in the fire" again, and we yoked up, and went forward mutually dissatisfied.

At Stratford-on-Avon he had come to a little, for I also had been knitting my brows. He went to see Shakespeare's monument, and I the house in which the poet resided, a dilapidated place, the walls covered with the names of persons who had visited, and I added mine.

At an ascent betwixt Stratford and Shipton, I must drive and Finnerty would walk, for the once. He got out encumbered with his top and box coats, and began to ascend a narrow track which I saw would lead him from the road, and not to it again ; as he had not, however, of late, paid much respect to my opinions, I thought I might as well not obtrude them just at that moment, and so I kept moving forward, leaning on the gig-side, and keeping an eye towards my blustering friend. He mounted to some height, when, looking up, he perceived his dilemma, and then, with a twist and a jerk, expressive of impatience, he descended the way he had gone up. I laughed until tears came into my eyes, and had with difficulty composed myself, when he having hallooed as loud as he could, and I having stopped, he came up puffing and perspiring, and so we went on.

At Shipton we learned that a coach would pass through the town that night for Oxford, and Finnerty took a sudden, and



to me a happy, resolution to proceed by it, leaving me to bring the horse and gig the day following to the Mitre Inn, at Oxford. He intimated that he had a particular engagement to be there next morning; and thus, for the present, I lost the society of my troublesome, querulous, but sometimes amusing companion.

It was a fine morning when, leaving Shipton, I urged the old tit gently on the road to the great seat of learning. Every nook, dell, and hill was new to me; and the men, the women, the children, and the houses were objects for continual observation. The mare had it pretty much her own way; her load was lighter, and she went trotting when she listed, and walked when she had a right to do—namely, uphill, and it was only when I detected her absolutely crawling that I touched her with the whip. At Chapel House, a large posting establishment, we both breakfasted, and then went on, through Eustone, Kiddington, and to Woodstock, the scene of the tale of Fair Rosamond, which had deeply interested me when a boy. At a respectable looking publichouse, where I stopped, I endeavoured to learn whether there was any tradition as to the probable site of the famous bower of the unfortunate beauty, but the people knew nothing respecting it, I heard enough about Blenheim and its duke, but I should not feel justified in repeating what they said, and the less so because the persons with whom I conversed were strangers to me, and neighbours to the nobleman, and therefore the more likely to remember his failings, and forget his commendable parts.

On entering Oxford I was struck by the noble and venerable appearance of many of its buildings, which I concluded in my own mind must be its churches and colleges. The streets were occupied by a numerous and very respectable looking population, and I was not long in descrying, by the peculiarity of their dress, some of those fortunate and ingenious youths who, "born with silver spoons in their mouths," are, as we are taught to believe, "designed by a wise providence," and are certainly permitted by a wise people (?) to spoon up the riches and superfluities, which else would, by their very grossness,

render said people dull of intellect, and sluggish in action ; and yet I didn't think the young fellows looked like "spoonies."

Having been directed to the Mitre Inn, I drove thither, and resigned the horse and gig to the ostler, with a charge to look well to the former. I then inquired at the bar for Mr. Finnerty, and was shown into a very smart room upstairs, where a plain-featured lady beyond the bloom of life, with a bonnet on, dressed in a florid style, and with a deep patten-shoe on one foot, was caressing a fine child that could run about. I paused and held back, the lady was surprised. I apologised and said I understood Mr. Finnerty was there. She said he was, and asked me to take a seat, he was in another room, and she would go for him, and she went out, taking the child with her. In a minute I heard my friend's voice as if something was wrong. He came in, shook my hand, and asked me to take refreshment. I took some tea and meat, and gave him an account of my pleasant journey. Whilst we were talking, the same lady with another child entered the room, and almost immediately went out again. He gave me to understand that the children were his, and that Mrs. Finnerty, himself, and the children, would return to London together. He asked how I should go, and I told him that I should walk it. He asked when I should start, and I said I had no connections in Oxford, nor any business to transact, and I saw no reason why I should not set out that night, and had best be making my way. Of course, he said, if I preferred going, there could be no reason why I should not ; he then gave me his address in London, and said I must be sure and call upon him, and he would immediately on his arrival have some conversation with Mr. Perry about me, and he doubted not that Mr. Perry would put something in my way. I then got up, and taking me by the hand he bade me good-bye, and said I must be sure to see him in London. I said I would, and repeating his salutation, I came downstairs, and went into the street.

The shades of evening were closing over the city when I thus adventured to begin my journey. I had no luggage, save a small bundle and an umbrella, which I threw over my

shoulder, and a stout ashen plant in my hand. I knew not which way to set forth, but went along the street towards the left, until I saw some respectable looking people, of whom I inquired the way to London; and they gave me such directions as enabled me soon to quit the town and strike into the open country. I continued to walk and it soon became dark, and when night had completely set in, I could scarcely trace the road before me. I walked, however, briskly, and went a long way without meeting any person, or hearing anything, save now and then the tinkle of a sheep bell. At length, when I must have left Oxford four or five miles behind, I began to hear noises at a distance on my right, and soon after I saw gleams like those of lights in the windows of a town. In a short time there were lights before me, and I found they proceeded from a publichouse, into which I went and asked for some ale, which was brought to me, and was of most excellent quality. On looking around, I liked the appearance of the house also; the rooms were neatly furnished and clean, the company was apparently respectable, and the people of the house obliging. I inquired how far it was to the next village, and how the road lay, and they all gave such an account as made me begin to think I had best remain where I was; the people of the house were of the same opinion, and so I took up my quarters there for the night.

Whilst we were chattering and enjoying ourselves comfortably with our pipes, some young fellows came into the next room, and called for ale. They were in high glee, and from their conversation, which we could not but hear, we learned that there had been a kind of battle-royal in the village betwixt some of the lads of the place and a party of collegians, and that the latter, after fighting bravely, which they allowed them the merit of generally doing, had been soundly thrashed, and compelled to retreat. I concluded that it must have been the noise of this row which had saluted my ears on the road. Some inquiries on my part, elicited an opinion from the company as to the general conduct of the young gentlemen at college, and it certainly, like all other human emanations, had its dark side, as well as its bright one, only rather more of the



former, than should be expected, considering they were to become examples to and directors of others.

They were represented as courageous fighters, generous remunerators, and profuse spenders ; all of which most of the company allowed were good English gentlemanly qualities ; but then, in their intercourse with those not of their class, they were represented as being arrogant, wilful, and capricious ; and too prone to lay on hard when they got the upper hand.

It was not to be wondered at, said an elderly person who sat on the other side of the room ; it was not the young gentlemen's fault, but the fault of their "pa's" and "ma's" at home, and of the institutions of the country. If Will was schooled to be an officer in the army, would he not begin by trying to domineer over and command all who would submit to him ? If Dick was to have his father's broad acres, how could he better prepare for the enjoyment of them, as things went, than by learning to drink, gamble, and box ; by picking up stable slang ; and becoming a connoisseur in "dogs, horse-flesh, and women"—as they had it—and by an early imitation of that reckless self-willedness which he had seen practised by his class at home ? If James is for the Church, should he not learn to be combative when a boy ; inasmuch as he would have to contend against "the world, the flesh," and —another antagonist—and in favour of tithes, preferments, and fat livings ? and if Jack was preparing for the navy, what so natural as that he should practise with a bamboo, instead of a rope's-end, on the heads and shoulders of the King's subjects ? Great folks, he said, sent their sons to college, and they came there tainted with the vices of their order, and the follies of their parents : they were here planted thick together like young trees ; the rank and worthless dragged the others up ; the vicious overshadowed the virtuous, and when they had become noxious or morally withered, they went back into the world, as their fathers had done, to prepare a new race to succeed them. All allowed that the elderly gentleman's remarks were about the fact ; I begged leave to drink his health, the company followed my example, and the conversa-



tion then becoming general, and chiefly on rural affairs, I went to bed.

I rose early; the morning again was as fine as could be desired, and I felt happy at travelling beside broad pastures, with the free wind blowing around me. I first traversed a level plain, and then went up a rather steep eminence, after which followed a road through woods a long way; all were new and interesting scenes to me. I walked some twelve or fourteen miles, and then made a hearty breakfast of bread, cheese, and ale, at a neat-looking, road-side publichouse. From thence I went on, through High Wycombe and Beaconsfield, where again I stopped a short time. I could not but admire the cleanness and airiness of the town. Towards evening I arrived at Uxbridge, and rested, after which I went towards London, and had gone some miles in the dark and rain, when a stage coach overtook me, and I mounted, and was set down at the "Bolt-in-Tun," Fleet Street, where, perhaps, it is unnecessary to say that I received very civil treatment, and stopped for the night.

## CHAPTER XXX.

MR. HUNT—SIR RICHARD PHILLIPS—AUTHOR'S PETITIONS TO PARLIAMENT—EARL GROSVENOR, AND HIS HOUSE AT GROSVENOR PLACE.

THE morning after my arrival I went to the warehouse of a friendly tradesman in Cheapside to look after some clothes, and other requisites, which I had directed to be sent after me, and I found all safe. I next went and took private lodgings, and then sought out Mr. Hunt, whom I found at the house of one Giles, a bread-baker, in Wyche Street, Strand. He introduced me to Sir Richard Phillips, and I had, during my stay, many opportunities of conversing with that worthy gentleman and scholar. He was friendly towards Hunt, but did not like his overbearing manner. Once, I recollect, when Hunt came, he ordered the footman to say he was not at home, and on observing probably a degree of surprise in my look, he said Mr. Hunt was neither happy himself, nor would he let his friends be so. They must not only serve him, but they must do it at his own time, in his own manner, and to the extent he wished, or he would quarrel with them. His earnestness and vehemence he carried with him everywhere, and exhibited on the most trifling occasions; in consequence, he became annoying and oppressive, and his best friends were sometimes compelled to defend themselves by not being at home. I knew there was too much truth in Sir Richard's representations to blame him greatly for his conclusions, though I must own I did not like my friend Hunt, with all his faults, to be thus dealt with; but Sir Richard said there was no other mode,

and he must either shut his door occasionally, or quarrel with him at once, and have done with him.

I gave Sir Richard my account of the Manchester affair, and at his suggestion, and under his care, petitions to the Houses of Lords and Commons were drawn up on my behalf, praying an investigation into the whole of the transaction, and offering to prove the allegations of the petitions at the bar of each House. Both petitions were duly presented, and with the usual result : namely, both were "laid upon the table."

But, connected with my petition to the Lords, an incident occurred, which, as it affords a glimpse of the great in London, I will narrate.

Earl Grosvenor was the nobleman selected to present my petition to the House of Lords, and Sir Richard went with me to his mansion, in Grosvenor Place I think it was. His lordship was not at home, and we were directed to call on a certain day. It happened that Sir Richard was then engaged, and I went to his lordship myself. The great burly porter, who wore a rich livery trimmed with gold lace, would scarcely admit me within the door, when he found I had not a letter of introduction. I explained to him my business with his lordship, but it was of no use, he could not send my message up. A fine table, with pens and paper, was near the window of the hall, and in my simplicity I made a move towards it, saying I could soon write a note to his lordship, but he said he could not allow me to write there ; it was contrary to orders, and would cost him his place if the other servants saw me. I accordingly bundled out, and went to a tavern and wrote a note, which I took back ; the porter then took the note, and told me to come again in about twenty minutes or half an hour. It was raining, and I had nowhere to go under cover, save the tavern, so I went there again—not much liking, however, this mode of noble housekeeping—and waited with impatience the time for the interview. I again went, and now the folding doors were thrown open long before I arrived at the steps ; the late surly porter received me with a respectful inclination and a smile, saying my note had been sent up, and his lordship would see me. He then rang a bell, and a servant

appeared, to whom the porter announced my name. The servant asked me to follow him, and he led me into a very grand room, where he left me, saying his lordship would be with me in a few minutes. I had never seen anything like the richness of this place before, everything seemed almost too sumptuous, and too delicate for a human habitation, and to me it seemed a little museum of curious and costly things, arranged but to look at, and not to use. There were mirrors, and pictures, and cushions, and carpets glowing like silk; and delicate hangings; and curtains, as fine as gossamer in summer; then the tables shone like glass, and the chairs, with their high cushions trussed up, quite tempted one to sit. Well, I stood looking about me some time, and no one appeared, and at last I thought, "I'll sit down at any rate; if his lordship should come in, he cannot be so greatly offended at one taking a seat in his house." So I sat down, and was quite surprised; I almost sank to my elbows in the soft downy cushion, and immediately jumped up again, thinking those seats could never really be meant for human bones to rest upon, and I would not for the world have been taken by his lordship sitting there, with the cushion up to my elbows like a puff of soap suds. I began to make the thing right again, and was so busied, when I heard a slight creaking noise; immediately I resumed my posture of attention, and a tall, gentlemanly-looking person, forty or forty-five years of age, dressed in a blue coat with yellow buttons, undoubtedly of gold, entered and accosted me in a very courteous and affable manner, and immediately entered upon the business of my petition. I addressed him as "my lord," which indeed he was, and told him somewhat about the subject of my petition, which I now showed him, and requested he would be so kind as to present for me to the House of Lords. He looked at it a few minutes, and said he would present it. He then questioned me about the state of the country, and particularly of my own neighbourhood, to each of which I gave him brief and true answers, according to the best of my ability. He then questioned me about our new rector at Middleton, the Rev. John Haughton, and as I was bound in truth, though not



at the time over partial to him, I gave his lordship a fair and honourable account of the worthy clergyman, whereat he seemed much pleased. Soon after I made my final bow, and was myself bowed out by the porter, and so I took my leave of that grand mansion and its immensely rich owner.

I frequently called to see Sir Richard Phillips, who always advised me to cultivate literature and poetry, as two friends who would be ready to console me at all times, and under all circumstances. He wished me to write something, in the metrical way, about the Manchester affair, but I never did; it never presented itself, as it were, to me in the form of poetry; it was too overpowering, too brimful of affliction, to be measured in verse. I made several attempts that way, but it would not do, and I never sought to describe it in any other form until this present publication. I felt grateful to Sir Richard; he gave me much useful caution and advice as to other matters in London. He acted the part of a real friend, and was the only professed scholar and literary character to whose acquaintance I can refer with entire satisfaction.

I called several times at the office of the *Morning Chronicle* to inquire if Mr. Finnerty was in town, and at last learned that he was so. I accordingly made my way to a suburb, somewhere west of the town, and following my directions, I knocked at the door of one of a lot of recently constructed edifices at the angle of a square. The same lady with the patten came to the door, and invited me to walk in, and showed me into a small, neatly furnished room on my right. Finnerty soon made his appearance, and, after mutual compliments, he asked when I arrived in town, what I had been doing, and such like, all of which I answered. He seemed, I thought, very mysterious and embarrassed in his manner, did not ask me to sit down or take anything, but at last said, "Would you like a walk round the square, Bamford?" I, thinking he wished for more private conversation, said I would, and we went out. We paced once round this place, chatting about indifferent matters, I expecting him to introduce my business with the *Morning Chronicle*, and at last, on my mentioning it, he did say he had not been able to see Mr.

Perry yet. We had then arrived at the angle from whence we set out, and were opposite his own door, when, giving me his hand, he said, "Good morning, Bamford; I shall be seeing you in town some of these days," and with that he went into the house and shut the door. I was mute with astonishment; my first impulse was to send the panel in with my foot, but then I thought neither the door nor its owner had done me harm, and at last, consoling myself with the reflection that it was no place for a worthy, honest man, and that I was better out of it than within it, I went away.

I should not have been much troubled at the sudden termination of this friendship, which I had for some time suspected to be all on my side, had I not, on returning into the city, weary, disappointed, and hungry, found that I must change my last shilling for my dinner. I had paid several sums on the road for ostlers, baiting, and so forth, before Finnerty left me at Shipton, and I had also paid all the expenses of the journey from Shipton to Oxford, which Finnerty had undertaken to pay, and said he would reimburse on my arrival at the latter place. I had quite forgotten to mention these matters at Oxford, but now, forced by necessity, I probably should have done so in a delicate way, had Finnerty, as I expected he would, asked me to take breakfast with him. But, as I said, they had quite slipped my memory, and friend Finnerty's, too, as it seemed, and now I had the uncomfortable prospect before me of starvation, or a beggarly dependence on the hospitality of friends, neither of which conditions had I anticipated on leaving home.

Next morning I went to the house of Mr. Pearson, in Aldersgate Street, and stated to him my willingness to try my hand at writing in his office, at terms previously mentioned by him, namely, a guinea a week. He immediately set me to work at copying, and thus by a word I was metamorphosed from a rude Lancashire rustic into "a limb of the law." I worked hard until two o'clock, and then went out, not to dine, for I had not wherewith to purchase a dinner. At four I returned and wrote again until six, and then shut up, and went to my humble lodgings at London Wall. I did thus for three or four

days, getting my breakfast and supper at my lodgings, and going without dinner. I began to feel unwell; I was cold, shivery, and nervous; I had never been quite well since the night I came drenched into London, and now, feverish as I was, the employment became intolerably irksome. At length I went to bed, and was so ill next morning I could not rise; I was in a fever, and the agitation of my mind added to the indisposition of my body.

The next day I went to Mr. Pearson, and told him that I had been ill, and hoped he would excuse me, but I could not bear to sit at the desk. He readily accepted my apology, and gave me a pound note for what I had done; he also invited me to come to his house that evening and take tea. I went and met him, his lady, a mild and beautiful young being, and a gentleman who was about to come out "as a phenomenon" at the bar. The day after I again went to Mr. Pearson's by appointment, when he took me to Peel's coffee-house, and set me to take memoranda from the newspapers, of passages from the addresses made by judges to grand juries on several State prosecutions. I gave him my notes, and believe I did the work to his satisfaction.

In a day or two after this I was informed that the London committee for the relief of the sufferers at the Manchester meeting had determined on presenting each of the persons who had been apprehended and held to bail with a sum of money—ten pounds, I believe—as some compensation for their loss of time and the inconvenience they had experienced. I accordingly went to the counting-house and manufactory of Mr. Alexander Galloway, the treasurer, whose place was then near Holborn, and presented myself for what belonged to me. He was at his desk writing, and I found him a cool, cautious, methodical man of business. He was very affable and mild, and I must say reasonable and convincing in his manner. On my stating who I was and the nature of my visit, he said he was sorry he could not pay me then, as, never having to his knowledge seen me before, he could not be certain that I was the person I represented myself to be, and he wished me to bring some gentleman, or produce a note from some one whom he knew, that I was



the same Samuel Bamford who had been arrested and committed to Lancaster Castle. I mentioned Mr. Hunt, Mr. Harmer, Mr. Wooller, and Mr. Pearson, who I said would instantly verify, could I get to see them, but the afternoon was far worn, and I might not be able to meet with them that night; I, however, had a letter or two of Mr. Hunt's, and one of Major Cartwright's, which I offered to produce. Those, he said, would not do; they would not show that I was the person to whom they were addressed. I must confess I was now a little piqued and disappointed, for I was in want of some money for immediate necessities. He saw, I thought, that I was hurt, for he begged I would not deem him needlessly cautious, as I must perceive, on reflection, how necessary it was, in a great place like London, to be quite certain as to the persons with whom they contracted business. He showed me, and he entirely conciliated me by the earnestness with which he did it, that he could not possibly have any wish to withhold the money from the person for whom it was ordered, and all he sought to ascertain was that I really was the person. I saw and appreciated his motive and his method of exactitude, and left him with the intention of obtaining a note from Mr. Harmer, whose office in Hatton Garden was the nearest place where I could expect to meet the requisite identification. Mr. Harmer was not within, nor would he be that night, and I gave the matter up until next day, submitting to the rather familiar inconvenience of going to bed dinnerless and supperless. On the forenoon of the following day I procured the necessary verification, and Mr. Galloway paid me the money, which proved a great present relief, as it enabled me to procure necessities, and to pay off my lodging and other small accounts. I afterwards called on Mr. Galloway frequently, in a friendly manner, and at one of these visits I saw Robert Owen, who was then exciting attention by his plans for the amelioration of the condition of mankind; at another visit Major Cochrane was there, an officer who was with the 15th Hussars on the field at the great meeting at Manchester. Mr. Galloway's counting-house appeared to be frequently resorted to by literary and scientific men of all parties and of all professions.



My petitions to Parliament had been duly presented, and had appeared, thanks to my friend Sir Richard, in several of the London journals. They excited some attention, and the committee of the relief fund deemed it proper that similar petitions should be presented by others of the sufferers. I accordingly, having now no further prospects or business in London, returned to Lancashire, and besides being of some use to Messrs. Hall and Service, who were sent down to select proper objects for relief, I promoted the getting up of petitions praying for inquiry, and when that had been done to a sufficient extent, I found the time at hand when it was necessary that I should begin to look about for evidence to produce at the approaching trial at York.

On application to my attorney, Mr. Pearson, I received a set of instructions for the collection of evidence.

Acting under these instructions, I wrote down with my own hand the examinations of about twenty-two witnesses, chiefly resident at Middleton, which examinations were copied literally by Mr. Pearson's clerk, and formed the basis of the defence relative to our proceedings. I next subpoenaed my witnesses, and they were requested to meet at the Dog and Partridge publichouse, at Middleton, at six o'clock in the morning of Monday, the 13th of March, in order that we might all go in a body on foot to York. On the evening preceding we took supper together, and we were joined by a number of witnesses from Manchester, who preferred to walk with us rather than go by coach. On mustering, I think we amounted to about three score, of whom probably a dozen were women, who, in high glee, chose to take the road with their relatives and friends. I should state that Mr. Pearson had placed in my hands a sum of money to pay the expenses, in which I was limited by my own discretion alone ; all my plans had been laid before him at Manchester, and he entirely approved of them. We set forward, therefore, with light hearts ; and amid this crowd of faces beaming with hope and the excitement of novelty, I could discover two only which wore a cast of thought and sadness. My wife and child were, as they always wished to be, with me ; they were going with us as far as Roch-

dale, whence they were to return ; my faithful dog, Mora, also went gambolling on before us. I tried to be cheerful, with a view to promote the same feeling amongst all around me, and I could have succeeded, had I only been concerned ; but when I caught my wife turning her head aside to conceal her emotion, and, looking down, met the tearful eye and inquiring look of my child, who held my hand, I could not but experience a pang that brought darkness and uncertainty to my heart, and which I endeavoured to conceal by smiles and consoling words.

At Rochdale we breakfasted at the Angel Inn, in Blackwater Street, and were there joined by witnesses from Bury and other places, who augmented our numbers to about four score. After an affectionate parting, full of hope on my side and of sadness on theirs, I left my wife and child to retrace their steps sorrowfully towards home, whilst I went forward, though somewhat thoughtful, amongst my joking, light-hearted companions. The ascent of Blackstone Edge, " the back-bone of the English Alps," as it has been termed, tried the marching qualities of the women, and by the time we arrived at the top, two of them were fatigued, and went on with a mail coach, which overtook us there. Their journey by this conveyance was a most unpleasant one ; some " gentlemen " from Manchester were also passengers and they used coarse and abusive language towards the females. The coachman and guard were appealed to for protection, but they only laughed, and, to please the " gemmen," contributed their share of insult. The women " gave it them," however, told them what they were, and when the coach arrived at Halifax, they got down, and refused to go any further with the unmanly beings. This conduct we only learned on our arrival at Halifax, and I mention it to show the strong and unworthy feeling which our opponents, even of the class commonly deemed respectable, were wont to indulge in those days.

Mr. Hunt, with Johnson and Chapman, followed us in a post-chaise, and they were detained a considerable time at Rochdale, in consequence of the landlord at the "Roebuck" Inn, one Marriott, refusing to supply them with fresh horses, on learning who they were. He was even uncivil to the

travellers, but soon found that he was not likely to get anything by that mode of behaviour, and horses having been procured from another house, the journey was proceeded with.

At Bradford many of the tender-footed men were lame, and I gave them money to go on with as best they could. Most of the women also had by this time enough of walking for that day, and they availed themselves of such modes of conveyance as were readily attainable ; some, however, held out, and walked with us every step of the road to Leeds, where we were hospitably received by the body of reformers, and lodged for the night. The next morning we made a strong muster, being joined by numbers from Stockport, Hyde, Ashton, Stalybridge, Saddleworth, and other places, and now I believe we mustered about one hundred persons ; some of the women, and an equal proportion of the men, were too lame to walk, and were sent forward by carriage ; the main body, however, on foot, passed through Tadcaster, and arrived at York in a compact body at night-fall, on Tuesday, the 14th of March. We were lodged and boarded at a large inn, the " Elephant," I think, on this side the river Ouse.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

THE MORNING OF OUR TRIAL—PREPARATIONS IN THE COURT—  
ITS INTERIOR APPEARANCE—WITNESSES—HUNT'S HAT—  
THE JURY—COUNSEL FOR THE PROSECUTION—ARRANGE-  
MENTS FOR THE DEFENDANTS.

OUR long expected trial, which had excited a strong interest in the public mind, commenced on the morning of Thursday, the 16th day of March, 1820, before Mr. Justice Bayley and a special jury. At an early hour the court was beset by persons waiting for admission. At a little before seven o'clock the reporters for the London and provincial press were admitted, and soon after several individuals, principally solicitors, and others connected with provincial newspapers, were admitted into the gallery. A number of ladies also took possession of a box at the corner of the court, on the right hand of the Bench. At eight o'clock a more general admission of the public took place, and the front seats in the two galleries were instantly occupied. A vast number of persons immediately followed, till not one inch of either gallery was left unoccupied. The box which the day before was reserved for the attorneys was, on this occasion, appropriated for the reception of magistrates, except the front seats, which had become occupied by some London reporters. In the rush and confusion, however, many had invaded the place who had no claim to seats there. These were forthwith informed by the officers of the court that they must retire. The mandate was reluctantly obeyed by some, but others obstinately retained their seats, until they were finally removed by order of the magistrates, when they arrived.



The number of witnesses put down for the prosecution exceeded eighty ; for the defence, one hundred and twenty.

At a quarter before nine, Hunt, Moorhouse, Saxton, Jones, Wilde, and Healey, went into the court ; soon afterwards I and Swift went up and applied for entrance at the common door of the court. We were informed by the keeper that no more could be admitted, the place being quite full. We smiled at this, and said we must be admitted, and desired him to open the door ; he stoutly refused, and we enjoyed the joke some time, and at last told him who we were, and that we should be wanted, and must take part in the trial. The man then admitted us, but almost as a favour, and we made our way up an avenue towards the witness box. Hunt saw us coming, and beckoned us to step over the backs of the seats, which we did, and I was presently by his side.

I may here remark, that at Manchester, both before and after the meeting, at Lancaster also, and at London, Hunt had uniformly worn a white hat, and it had in consequence become the Radical badge ; Johnson had also done the same, but here, before a judge and a jury of their country, they deemed it proper to display the common black hat. I, however, who never thought it wrong to be the same always and in all places, who saw not anything to be really ashamed of in the colour of my hat, and who would not, just then, have discarded it to please judge, jury, or king, threw it down innocently enough amongst the lawyers' bags and papers, and other hats of a different colour, some of which were the sombre ones of my co-defendants. There were some looking and smiling at the presumptuous appearance of a Radical hat on that table. Others of our party, like myself, stuck to their white colours, declaring they would not change them under any circumstances. I only mention this incident to show a trait of what the world deems prudence, and its judicious exercise, by some of our leaders.

At nine o'clock Justice Bayley took his seat on the Bench, and immediately the cause of the King against Henry Hunt, Joseph Johnson, John Knight, James Moorhouse, Joseph Healey, John Thacker Saxton, Robert Jones, Samuel Bamford,

George Swift, and Robert Wilde was called on. The names of the persons summoned to act as special jurors were then read.

At this time the court was most excessively crowded; all the bottom seats and avenues, as well as every inch of standing ground, a passage for the witnesses excepted, were closely occupied. In each of the galleries the people were packed like bees in a hive, and there was ground for apprehension that the fronts might be forced out. It was some time before order could be obtained, so eager were persons of all ranks to witness the commencement of this trial. The jury box had been partly filled by strangers and had to be cleared, and several common jurymen who happened to be in it made a remonstrance to the judge on the hardship of being turned, not only out of that box, but also out of the one which had always been assigned to the waiting jurymen. This circumstance was occasioned by the arrangements which the High Sheriff, Henry Vansittart, Esq., and his subordinate officers had made for the accommodation of the public. The box usually assigned to the magistrates of the county was this day opened for the reception of the Manchester and Cheshire magistrates; the one usually reserved for attorneys was given up to reporters for the public Press, and the attorneys, being deprived of their usual place in court, went into the jury box, and filled it so entirely as to occasion the remonstrance just mentioned. Justice Bayley said he did not understand the arrangements of the court; the place was now full: if, however, there was any situation to which the waiting jurymen had a right he would order it to be cleared and kept for their accommodation; the box was accordingly cleared.

The jury having been sworn, Mr. Littledale opened the proceedings, and the indictment was read, the substance of which, having been already given, I shall not now repeat. We, of course, all pleaded "Not Guilty," except John Knight, who, since being bailed out of Lancaster Castle, had again been committed on a subsequent charge for attending a meeting near Burnley.

Mr. Scarlett, Mr. Serjeant Hullock, Mr. Serjeant Cross,

and Mr. Littledale, conducted the prosecution: Mr. Holt was retained for Saxton, and Mr. Barrow for Moorhouse and Jones. Hunt, Johnson, Wilde, Swift, Healey and myself conducted our several defences and for that purpose we took our places at the barristers' table. Some conversation ensued respecting this arrangement, and Mr. Hunt expressed his willingness to agree to any other, but the judge decided that every individual conducting his own defence should sit there; the others must take seats behind their counsel.

Mr. Hunt said he had not been previously aware of the arrangements for the court, and he had therefore invited his co-defendants to the situations they occupied; room, however, would easily be found for them behind the bar, as he intended to move that all the witnesses on both sides (and he knew many were in court) should be ordered out of it.

Justice Bayley accordingly ordered all the witnesses to withdraw from the court. Mr. Barrow added, "And out of hearing also."

The order was immediately complied with; and amongst those who retired were the Rev. W. R. Hay, the Rev. C. W. Ethelstone, Mr. Hulton, Mr. Sylvester, Mr. R. Wright, and several other of the Manchester magistrates, together with a number of gentlemen and tradesmen who had been subpoenaed as witnesses. The defendants who had retained counsel also took their places behind them on the seats usually allotted to attorneys, and the very inconvenient pressure in the court was considerably mitigated.

Immediately under the judge at the straight edge of the table, which was a half-round, sat the counsel for the prosecution already named with their attorneys. On the judge's left, and occupying the curved edge of the table, were George Swift, Mr. Harmer, of London (who kindly suggested various matters to us), next myself, then Mr. Hunt, Mr. Pearson, Mr. Wilde, Mr. Barrow, Mr. Holt, Mr. Healey and Mr. Johnson—the two latter sitting near the witness box and almost directly in front of the judge. The further side of the table was occupied by attorneys and others; a number of elegantly dressed females were upon the right and left of the judge and



occupying seats below and standing on the floor; the large box behind us, at first assigned to magistrates, and which had been almost filled by those of Lancashire and Cheshire, who vacated it on the order being given for witnesses to retire, was now filled with a crowd of ladies and gentlemen, chiefly, as we understood, residents in the county; many ladies had obtained seats in the body of the hall, and one was observed taking the likeness of the venerable judge as he sat in his robes.

Mr. Scarlett, after the opening by Mr. Littledale, proceeded to address the jury; but as it would be entirely beyond the scope of this work to give the proceedings of the trial, which have, no doubt, long since been placed amongst the public records, I shall only touch on such passages as concern myself and throw light on my conduct both previous to and during this important investigation. I shall intersperse such observations with brief remarks upon and descriptions of some things which occurred both in public court and were privately known to ourselves, and shall be content to be judged, so far as my name may be concerned, by the facts which I truthfully narrate. Mr. Scarlett's description of us should not, however, be omitted. It was as follows:—

Of Mr. Hunt it was unnecessary that he should say anything, because his name had been so much of late connected with these transactions as to leave no doubt on the mind of any man as to his character and avocations. The others were obscure; they were very little known, and he should therefore state who they were, premising that they were charged with assembling and inciting others to assemble to disturb the public peace. John Knight had formerly been in business; his occupation had been latterly that of an itinerant orator. Joseph Johnson was a brushmaker residing near Manchester, and he believed he also was in the habit of attending public meetings. Of John Thacker Saxton, all the description which he had was that he was some way or other connected with the office of a newspaper, called the *Manchester Observer*. Joseph Healey was represented as an apothecary. James Moorhouse was a coach-master residing at Stockport. George



Swift was a shoemaker at Manchester. Of Robert Wilde he knew nothing, save that he lived near Ashton-under-Lyne. Samuel Bamford and Robert Jones were individuals in humble circumstances. The jury, he said, would find by unquestionable evidence that these persons were connected in some secret design. He would be able to show the course which the parties took when he called his evidence, and therefore it was not necessary for him at that moment to state the specific acts of each; it would be sufficient to give a general view of their proceedings.

The learned counsel then indicated the line of accusation he should take against Mr. Hunt especially. He commenced with the Spitalfields' meeting at London in the June previous, setting forth the resolutions and describing them as illegal. Mr. Hunt was next traced to Bullock Smithy;\* thence to Manchester, connecting him with the proposed meeting on the 9th of August. Then he described the drillings at White Moss and the beating of Murray and his companions. He showed Mr. Hunt to have been stopping at the house of Johnson, at Smedley, where he said he received the visits of Knight and others of the defendants. Next he represented the people as marching from all parts on the morning of the 16th of August. They were, he said, provided with banners and inscriptions, and they marched upon Manchester with all the regularity of an army. From Rochdale, from Middleton, from Oldham, from Lees, from Stockport, and many other places, parties might be seen marching towards Manchester. "At Middleton Mr. Bamford was seen placing in marching order a body of two thousand men; they were without uniforms, but he displayed sufficient talent to put them through their evolutions. He addressed them and gave to each of them a laurel leaf, that they might distinguish one another. The town of Manchester was, in fact, surrounded by an immense force, who seemed as if they were going to invade it. Every road which approached the town was covered with parties marching in military manner, and amongst those who were marching to the town some of the individuals who

\* The name of the place has been changed to Hazel Grove.

were seen training at White Moss were recognised. At eleven o'clock Mr. Hunt and his party were preparing to enter the town from the residence of Johnson. Mr. Hunt was attended by a triumphant band; the Middleton and Rochdale force had united, they became his guards, and thus surrounded he entered the town of Manchester."

Next he commented on our banners, and some of his strictures may show the difference betwixt the interpretation of the laws in those days and the present. I will give a short extract of that part of his address.

On some of the flags they would find the words, "Equal Representation or Death." What could be the object of a sentiment such as this? He would ask the jury to lay their hands on their hearts and say, What good object could those have in view who exhibited a flag bearing such a motto? They were not met there to discuss whether the present state of the House of Commons was the best that could be imagined. Good and wise men differed on that point, but, whatever difference of opinion might be entertained on the subject, of this he was sure, that there was no man who considered the question rightly that would not stand by the law and the constitution of the country as they were now administered; and if threatened with violence, that would not resist to the uttermost an attempt to make a forcible alteration of the system.

Another banner bore the inscription, "No Corn Laws." He came not before them to discuss whether the law on the subject of corn was good or otherwise; he had his opinions on the question, but it would not be decorous or proper to state them there. He knew that wise men might sometimes frame a mischievous law, but it was not to be removed by riot and violence. Would it not be a most dangerous thing to say to a mob of sixty thousand persons, for the purpose of getting rid of such a measure—particularly when the minds of the people were irritated and inflamed—would it not, he asked, be an appeal of a most inflammatory nature, to say to them, "We will have no Corn Laws; we will force the legislature to do as we please."

Next came the inscription, "Annual Parliaments." There were no doubt respectable and honourable men in the kingdom, who thought annual parliaments would be very useful; but would any of those individuals say that such a proposition was to be carried by violence, as the *sine quâ non* of their existence? Let the people meet to petition for reform—let them submit to Parliament what they think expedient for the public good—and no man can complain. But was it the business of a public meeting to dictate to Parliament, and to declare that it would effect a certain object, or would have nothing? The next inscription was "Universal Suffrage and Election by Ballot." These two points were the pretexts for calling this assembly; he felt considerable surprise that Mr. Hunt did not perceive that those three terms, taken together, meant nothing but the subversion of the Constitution, but as long as these questions were *sub judice*, what right had any man to say, "we will, in spite of all opposition, have these three things." To do so was illegal; and it was most unfit that, on the subject of public grievances, the mob should be suffered to dictate to the legislature. Let them meet and petition; let the weavers and shoemakers and other artisans in this kingdom who are destined to earn their bread by the labour of their hands inform the legislature of the best course to be pursued with respect to public affairs, if they have more wisdom than those by whom such affairs were conducted. The law enabled them to do this; but let not demagogues state to them that these three points were the only things which could be of service to them. Another inscription was, "Let us die like men, and not be sold like slaves." Who, he should like to know, had been selling the people of Oldham, of Rochdale, of Middleton, and of the other places, the inhabitants of which went to Manchester on that day? He never heard of any such sale; but some persons, who did not, perhaps, choose to speak those words, thought fit to place them on a banner.

Such were some of the constructions which the learned counsel attached to some of our banners and their inscriptions; constructions which, if followed in these days, would



place some of the Chartist exhibitors in a rather perilous position.

Witnesses were now called, who traced Mr. Hunt through Bullock Smithy, Stockport, Heaton Norris, and from Manchester, to Johnson's at Smedley. On the examination of a witness named John Chadwick, who swore that he saw Murray at the White Moss, on the morning of the fifteenth, Mr. Hunt objected to his evidence, because he had said he did not know any one who was there by name.

Mr. Scarlett said he wished to show that some of the White Moss drillers had attended Mr. Hunt.

Mr. Hunt said it mattered not, unless some of those persons were among the accused.

Mr. Scarlett hoped Mr. Hunt would not be allowed to disturb the proceedings of the court.

Mr. Justice Bayley: Mr. Hunt has a right to take the objection, and I am doubting whether this is evidence.

The witness was here sent out of court.

Mr. Scarlett said he was about to show that some of these persons who were training, and who assaulted Murray, had attended the meeting of the 16th, and had also cheered opposite Murray's house; he would show that Mr. Hunt and his party had done the same. This, he conceived, was perfectly regular.

Mr. Justice Bayley: When you have shown that any of the persons of the White Moss party were at the meeting on the 16th, then it will be evidence, but I think you had better prove that first.

The witness was again called in and examined, and said the first person he saw at the meeting on the 16th was a man whom he had seen at the White Moss, with a letter brought from Manchester. A person arrived at White Moss after witness had seen Murray; the parties then formed into a square like four walls, and the man who was to read the letter was in the centre. The letter was not read, as they said there was no name to it, and they would have nothing to do with it; the man then joined them. The man who was to have read the letter was the man who led up the Middleton



and Rochdale parties on Monday. This man was drilling the men, and giving the word of command.

Such was the first link of the evidence which, by inference, connected me with the White Moss affair. Why that link was not broken will hereafter appear. For the present Mr. Pearson advised me to sit still, and not cross-examine the witness; he would be sure, he said, to swear I was the man he saw at the Moss; he would swear right a-head, no doubt. It was for the witness to point me out, and not for me to offer myself to his notice. I accordingly kept my seat. This was the only evidence tendered on the first day of the trial which applied to me.

On the morning of the second day the court was crowded soon after seven o'clock. The rush when the doors were open was excessive, and a number of ladies again encountered the pressure of the crowd; they were soon, however, accommodated with such places as could be spared near the Bench, and in the magistrates' large box on the left. The defendants were assisted by Mr. Harmer and Mr. Pearson as on the previous day. Mr. Justice Bayley took his seat at half-past nine. Many persons of rank in the county were present during the day.

William Morris, the first witness examined by Serjeant Cross, said: I am a weaver, residing five miles from Manchester. In the month of August last I saw many groups of people near Middleton; Samuel Bamford used to be amongst them. Early on the morning of the 16th of August, I saw many hundreds of people put into regular form at Middleton, with two flags, and twenty-five men were in each section. I know not who formed them into sections, but there certainly was a large number collected—two or three thousand at least. They marched off four abreast, after being first drawn into the form of a square, in the inside of which was placed a chair, on which Bamford stood and said:—"Friends and neighbours, I have a few words to relate; you will march off this place quietly, and not insult any one, but rather take an insult. I do not think there will be any disturbance, or anything to do; if there is, it will be after we come back—there is no fear,

the day is our own." He got off the chair and distributed laurel amongst the men who were to command the sections. They put it, some in their breasts, and some in their hats. Before they went away a large number of people came arranged in form from Rochdale, with a band of music before them, and bearing two flags. Both bodies joined and went off together, each with a cap of liberty. The men had nothing in their hands but bits of switches, or small sticks. Before that day I saw the Middleton people forming and arranging, both in fields and highroads. Bamford was with them at different times. John Whitworth, who had been a private in the Sixth Regiment of Foot, was drilling the men, but not on the 16th of August. John Heywood, who had been a private in the Sixth Dragoons, had also done the same.

In his cross-examination by me the witness said: I heard you recommend them to be peaceable, and understood you wished them to continue so during the whole day. Many thousands went with the Middleton and Rochdale people who were not formed with them, as well as a good deal of women and children.

Such was the evidence of this witness: it was, I dare say, as near the truth as he could recollect, and was, on the whole, strongly in my favour. I knew some points in his character which would have enabled me to put him through a severe cross-examination, but I forebore, not wishing to injure the testimony he had given on my behalf. Hunt, however, who could not miss an opportunity for display, took him up, and handled him most unmercifully; on which Serjeant Hullock remarked aside to one of his brother counsel, what a fool Hunt must be to destroy the man's credibility, he being to all intents and purposes *our* witness. The life of this man had been one of adventure and intrigue. He had been long in the army, and deserted from it whilst a sergeant on a foreign station, taking with him his arms and accoutrements. Soon after this trial he was apprehended for passing forged Bank of England notes, and was convicted, but, strong interest having been used to save his life, he was transported, and died abroad.

John Heaton being examined by Mr. Littledale, said:—I

live at Middleton, and am a plumber and glazier. On the morning of the 16th of August I saw many people assembled, and Samuel Bamford among them, and in front. They had music and two flags. The inscriptions were—"Liberty, Strength, and Unity," and something with a cap on a pole. Bamford had a bunch of laurel in his hand, and many others had a little of it in their hats.

In my cross-examination, he said: I saw nothing but small sticks. I don't know your wife, but there were many women and children, three, four, and five abreast, who appeared to partake of the conviviality of the procession. The people did not appear sulky; they had no angry looks, but were more, as it were, in joy. I have some little property, and had then, but I felt no occasion to go home and shut my doors when I saw this procession.

On the third day James Platt swore to having seen me on the hustings on St. Peter's Field, and this finished the evidence against me; but the criminatory proceedings were not closed until the afternoon of the fourth day. The court continued to be crowded each day from an early hour. The ladies seemed still as curious as at first, and their eagerness to witness the proceedings induced many of them to seek an entrance into the court, through privileged avenues, so early as seven o'clock. At eight the public gates were generally thrown open, and the galleries and area became speedily filled, in the usual hurried manner, by a mixed throng, which rushed into every seat and corner of the court that was not defended by constables, for the use of magistrates, attorneys, and jurors.

On the evening of the second day, Mr. Harmer left us to attend the trial, if I mistake not, of Sir Francis Burdett, at Leicester. A Mr. Bryant, who I understood to be a kind of chamber counsel at London, remained with Hunt and Pearson, and assisted the former in making his points and objections, but from him I derived no benefit. The time was now approaching when I should be called on for my defence, yet I had never had one minute's private conversation with our attorney; he had never, according to my recollection,



been at my inn, nor asked me to his, nor had he ever spoken to one of my witnesses, or given me any instructions, except those already noticed, for the collection of evidence ; I was, in fact, entirely left to my own resources. Every night after the court had risen, he, Hunt and Bryant, retired and spent the evening together, and remained unapproachable by, and invisible to, the other defendants. Indeed, excepting those who had counsel, Hunt, so far as I was enabled to judge, was the only one of the party who had the benefit of careful legal advice. During my cross-examination of the witnesses against me, Mr. Pearson would occasionally suggest a question, or advise the suppression of one ; but in other respects I was left to seek counsel from my own judgment. I regret having to say this, but truth requires it. Every night Hunt retired with his friends, discussing the occurrences of the day and preparing for the next ; consequently, he came into court ready at all points, and, like a loaded gun, he only required a sudden impulse to make a grand discharge. Under these circumstances it was no wonder that he performed so well, that he appeared to be so greatly talented, whilst his co-defendants had not credit for the little talent which some of them really possessed. This was just the position which Hunt wished himself and us to occupy. He would be all in all, and he could not endure that the humblest of us should come betwixt the public and himself, that the smallest shadow should intercept one ray of his luminous presence. This intense selfishness was constantly displayed in all his actions. I saw it and was astonished ; I could not account for it except by condemning him, and that was not to be thought of ; though the facts came oozing out like water-drops, I could not harbour an unkind thought of our leader ; "it was his way" ; "it was the way of great folks" ; "it was perhaps necessary that he should do so and so" ; anything, in fact, rather than allow the unwelcome truth to whisper that in his weak points Hunt was the weakest of men. I had recently some misgivings as to the integrity of his character, but they had speedily vanished ; I could not endure an unworthy opinion of any of my comrades, still less of him



who occupied the most prominent station before the public. This may be called simplicity ; it was the simplicity of an uncorrupted mind. I deemed all reformers as good as myself, and I knew that I could answer for the sincerity and disinterestedness of my own intentions. It was not until years had elapsed that observation and reflection enabled me to penetrate the mist which had so long enveloped me. Then it was that I became aware of the real nature of past transactions and of the character of some who had been my political friends and fellow-workers in the cause of reform.

But during this important trial circumstances arose which compelled us at times to forget all anxiety and seriousness. Healey, as before intimated, was one of the five defendants who had a seat at the barristers' table. On the second day, Mr. Scarlett had a smelling-bottle which he frequently used, and then laid on the table before him. Our friend the doctor was seated nearly opposite to the learned gentleman, and I observed him once or twice cast very desirous looks towards the phial whilst the barrister was using it. Mr. Scarlett, however, did not, or affected not to, notice our surgical friend, and at last the patience of the latter being tried beyond control, he leaned across the table and very respectfully solicited the loan of the bottle, which was readily granted. "Oh yes, doctor ! by all means," said Mr. Scarlett, politely handing it to him, who immediately applied it to his nose and evinced its pungency by very zestful sneezing, which obliged him to apply his handkerchief to his eyes. Of course there was some tittering around the table and Mr. Scarlett was declared to have "taken the doctor fairly by the nose." Hunt laughed till his eyes were brim full, whilst Healey sat quite unconscious and serious. Soon after the bottle was returned with compliments and the trial claimed our attention. On the third day Mr. Scarlett did not bring the smelling-bottle, and the doctor seemed disappointed. On the fourth day the doctor lugged a long, square smelling-bottle out of his pocket and laid it down before him. Mr. Scarlett took no notice. The doctor smelled and laid it down. Mr. Scarlett took no

notice. The doctor smelled again. Mr. Scarlett did not see him. At length, determined not to be outdone in generosity, the doctor thrust it towards Mr. Scarlett with a bow and a request that he would use it. Mr. Scarlett coloured, but he good-humouredly took the phial and, having smelled, he politely returned it with thanks, which the doctor as politely acknowledged. The same ceremony was repeated once, if not oftener afterwards, and the doctor, then perfectly satisfied, gave up the farce.

On the morning of Sunday, the 19th of March, I retired to my little back room at a cottage opposite the inn, for I boarded at the latter place and lodged with a worthy couple across the street. I now read and compared my notes and spent several hours in framing the heads of my speech for the day following. On the morning of Monday, Mr. Chapman was sent by a committee of our friends, who were carrying into effect arrangements for the subsistence of the witnesses; the latter had been boarded at our hotel at the rate, if I mistake not, of five shillings per head per day, and it was found necessary to reduce the expenditure, else there would not be funds to carry us through the trial. The witnesses were thenceforth to provide for themselves and would have an allowance of three shillings per day for that purpose; all the money was to go into a common fund for disbursements. I accordingly handed to him what money I had remaining, and that cause of anxiety was removed from my mind.

It became apparent towards the noon of Monday, the fourth day of the trial, that the prosecutors were about to close their case, and that the defence must be commenced on the afternoon of that day. Whilst we were talking of the matter, Hunt said, "Bamford, you will be called on to address the court the first of all the defendants." I said I thought that scarcely probable, as we should most likely be called in the order in which our names stood in the indictment. Hunt said he knew that was contemplated by the opposing counsel, and particularly by Mr. Scarlett, who wanted to bring him out in the evening when he was exhausted, the court wearied, and the public satiated and listless. But, with an oath, he said

he was not to be taken aback that way, he was too old a bird to be caught by such a manœuvre. He then opened to me his plans and said that Messrs. Barrow and Holt, the counsel for Moorhouse, Jones, and Saxton, would first address the court, then I should be called on, next Healey, then Swift, and lastly Johnson. I asked him if he thought the opposing parties would acquiesce in that arrangement, and he said if Mr. Scarlett objected, as he durst say he would, he himself would make a special application to the judge on the subject, or to adjourn the trial until the following day. "Now, Bamford, by ——" he said, "I'll tell you what you must do if called this afternoon." "Well, what should I do?" I inquired. "You must talk against time," he said. "Talk against time?" I asked, "what's that?" "You must keep possession of the court an hour and a half at least," he said; "you must talk to put on time in order to prevent them from calling on me under any circumstances to-night. I know well that is what Scarlett is aiming at, and we must play our game so as to put it beyond his power." "But I am not prepared with matter for an hour and a half's speech," I said; "I should break down if I attempted it." "Don't mind that," he replied, "don't mind anything, only keep on." "I should make myself look like a fool, and they would be laughing at me and stopping me," I replied. "Pshaw! and suppose they did, you could listen and, when they had done, begin again." "But I should not know what to say." "Say! say anything, the d——est nonsense in the world, never mind what you say, only keep on until they cannot call me to-day." Something like a glimmer of the naked truth flashed across my reluctant mind and I replied: "No, Mr. Hunt, I will not do as you desire, I will not exhibit myself before this court as a fool; I will speak as long as I can speak, to the purpose and with common sense. I would speak until dark if that would serve you, and I was prepared for the task; but I am not, and I won't make myself ridiculous." "Very well," said Hunt, and looked another way, quite cool and distant.

I then showed the manuscript of my address to Mr. Pearson, and he advised the striking out of a passage wherein



I alluded to the circumstance of my having slept at the house of my wife's uncle on the night previous to Murray being at White Moss, and to the fact of the servant girl having removed my shoes whilst cleaning the house after I went to bed, and my not being able to find them on the following morning and her having to find them for me. He said that passage should be erased; it had not been proved that I was at White Moss, and the attempt to explain away what had not been proved would rather strengthen the opinion, if such existed, that there was really some truth in the supposition of my having been on the Moss. I reminded him of what Chadwick had sworn, and of what Morris and Heaton had sworn, as to my leading up the people, but he said that was not sufficient to call on me for a replication; I had not been pointed out, not personally identified by Chadwick, and I had best not take any notice of that part of the evidence. I must confess I did not see this distinction clearly, but I yielded to his advice and the passage was struck out; the servant girl alluded to also was not examined as to that point by me.

I think it was about three o'clock in the afternoon when Michael Fitzpatrick, a reporter for the *New Times*, and the last witness for the prosecution, made his exit from the witness-box. Mr. Barrow and Mr. Holt then addressed the court on behalf of their several clients, and Mr. Hunt made application to the judge that I should next be heard, and the other defendants after me, in order that, as an indulgence, his address might be deferred until the following morning. Mr. Scarlett, I think, observed that such a course would be irregular, but did not strongly object to it, and the favour was granted. I accordingly addressed the court in the following terms:—

“My lord, and gentlemen of the jury,—Before I enter into a detail of the evidence which I intend to produce in my defence, I think it necessary to notice some expressions made use of by the learned counsel for the prosecution in the speech which he addressed to the court on the opening of these proceedings. I allude to that part of his address where he said that ‘Bamford was seen training a body of ten thousand



men on the morning of the 16th.' If the brief which the learned gentleman had before him instructed him to make such an assertion, so much the better, and I sincerely wish, for his own honour, that it may be so. [Mr. Scarlett intimated across the table that such were his instructions.] But your lordship and the jury cannot have failed to observe that the testimony of Morris contains no such proof, and he alone has appeared against me with respect to the transactions that took place at Middleton, previous to our movement towards Manchester. Indeed, Morris states that he knew not who formed the people into section, division, and square; that they were so formed, but by whom he does not undertake to say. The learned gentleman also, in commenting upon some of the banners and their inscriptions, described one as bearing the words 'Annual Parliaments' and 'Universal Suffrage,' and insinuated that such were put forth as a demand, whence he inferred a design to subvert the constitution and government. Now, the mottoes on the banner so erroneously described, were nothing more than an avowal of what we considered, and do still consider, as our political right. There was no such thing as a demand about it; why should we demand that which we were going to Manchester to petition for?

"With respect to drilling, I have, in common with my neighbours, heard much, seen some, and could have seen more; for it was, to use a common, though very memorable, phrase, 'as notorious as the sun at noonday.' If it will not be trespassing too much on the time of the court, I will endeavour to give a brief account of its origin and intention. In the course of the last six years Manchester has witnessed many public meetings, to all of which, with the exception of the last, great numbers of people from the surrounding towns and villages proceeded in groups; and on these occasions they were uniformly styled by the Liberal and venal press of the place, mobs—riotous, tumultuous, and disorderly mobs; they were ridiculed as illiterate, dirty, and mean, having chapped hands and greasy nightcaps. They were scandalised as being drunken and disorderly, as being libellous and seditious, dividers of property,

and destroyers of social order; and was it not then very natural that these poor, insulted, and vilified people should wish to rescue themselves from the unmerited imputations which were wantonly cast on their character? It certainly was natural that they should wish to give the lie to their enemies, and thereby show to the nation and to the world that they were not what they had been represented to be. They determined to give one example of peace and good order, such as should defy the most bitter of their enemies to criminate, and for this purpose, and this alone, was the drilling, so styled, instituted. Only one witness for the prosecution has sworn to having heard amongst the drillers the word 'fire'; all the others swear only to their facing, and to their marching in file and in line, which evolutions were certainly most suited to familiarise them with that uniformity of motion which would be necessary for the preservation of due order and decorum in their progress to the place of meeting. But as to these facts I do not tender to your lordship and the jury my own assertion only. I refer you to the papers laid before the House of Commons, relative to the internal state of the country. The particular document to which I refer in those papers is dated the 5th of August, only four days previous to the first proposed meeting at Manchester, which should have been on the 9th; so that if we suppose the drilling parties to have been in existence a week or a fortnight before the day on which the letter referred to is dated, the ground of my argument is strengthened. That military gentleman who did us the honour to stand so long before us on Saturday evening, and whose services, I trow, consisted in marching with Colonel Fletcher from Bolton to Manchester, and from Manchester to Bolton, talks of 'midnight drillings,' and of parties coming to the meeting in 'beautiful order.' The former representation is not, I presume, legal evidence, and, of course, will not appear on your lordship's notes. The latter confirms what I have said respecting the wish of the people to preserve the strictest decorum.

"Your lordship and the jury will find by the evidence which I shall produce that by nine o'clock on the morning of the

ever memorable 16th of August, numbers of persons assembled at Middleton; that they were formed into a hollow square; and that whilst so formed I addressed them, earnestly cautioning them to be on their guard against enemies, and representing the advantage which might be taken of their numbers to create a riot by persons who might be employed for that sole purpose; that I advised them not to insult any person, but rather suffer an insult on that day, as their opponents would be glad of a pretext to accuse them of riot and disorder; that I entreated them to bear towards every one a spirit of good-will, in token of which I distributed amongst them branches of laurel, emblems of purity and peace, as described by Morris and Heaton; and having heard that if I went to the meeting the police of Manchester would, on its own responsibility, arrest me, I cautioned the people against offering any resistance, if such an attempt should be made, as I preferred an appeal to the laws of my country rather than to force; that I insisted no sticks should be taken, and that in consequence several were left by the way; that we went in the greatest hilarity and good-humour, preceded by a band of music, which played loyal and national airs; and that our fathers, our mothers, our wives, our children, and our sweethearts were with us. And this was the dreadful military array which the learned counsel described as 'one vast army, bearing from all parts to the invasion of Manchester'—poor, forlorn, defenceless Manchester. These were 'the soldiers ready to fight for Mr. Hunt'; with bare heads and with arms locked—a fighting posture, forsooth—who terrified that immortal author of green books, Mr. Francis Phillips; and of such persons, oh, dreadful to relate! was formed that 'cordon,' impenetrable to everything, save the newly ground sabres of the Manchester Yeomanry Cavalry."

At this time the judge arose hastily and motioned me to cease speaking; the blood had gushed from his nose on the cushion before him, and he retired, with the High Sheriff, and one or two gentlemen that were near him. In a short time his lordship returned, and I merely added some conversations on the conduct of a magistrate who had detained papers of mine,



which, being a manuscript of one of Hoyle's games at draughts, the zealous functionary suspected it might possibly be the plan of a plot in cypher. I also said I should leave my share of the general defence to Mr. Hunt, whose superior knowledge and eloquence would, no doubt, obtain for us full justice, which was all we wanted.

In confirmation of this speech, I adduced evidence which showed that I inculcated peace and good order to the Middleton party before we left Barrowfields ; that there was not to be any opposition to the police, should they come to arrest me or any other person ; that the people were to keep themselves select, and return with their banners, and not to stop in the town drinking, nor loitering in the streets ; that no sticks were allowed in the procession except to aged persons, and that several were resigned on the ground, or left by the way ; that the wives of several of the party accompanied their husbands, and that there were many young females and children with the procession ; that we seemed quite cheerful on the road ; that there were no symptoms of alarm in Middleton or on the road ; and that the drillings were public and in open day. In short, all that I advanced in my speech was fully confirmed by my evidence.

After me, Swift, Healey, and Johnson got up in succession. Healey had for a day or two appeared to be labouring under a cold with hoarseness. He sat opposite the judge, with a handkerchief thrown over his head, the corners drooping on his shoulders, exactly as the flaps of his lordship's wig drooped on his. He frequently looked up towards the glass dome above him, as if a stream of air came from thence and he was affected by it ; but he did not attempt to move to another seat, which he probably would have done, had he experienced illness from that cause. Whether this was the case or not, it is a fact that he had a speech to read which had been written by a friend at Lees, and he could not read it. He then had a cold, became hoarse, and the clerk of the court read the speech for him. This official was a well-fed, red-faced, snub-nosed personage, with spectacles on his nose, and a wig of legal cut on his head. He held the document at a considerable



altitude, as if he were looking over his spectacles instead of through them, and he read the speech in a monotonous, half-speaking, half-singing tone, much as a school-boy, some twenty years ago would have droned out his lesson. The doctor stood at his elbow, his looks evincing surprise and disappointment, that his document should have fallen into such incapable hands ; next he became impatient, as was manifest by his varying attitudes and sharp gesticulations, by which he meant to supply the want of modulation and emphasis in the reader. An artist was in court sketching at the time, and if he took this pair of originals, his portfolio may some day turn out one singular illustration of nature.

Hunt had thus obtained what he so ardently desired, a night for consultation, reflection, and repose, and a crowded morning audience for his grand exhibition. I shall not dwell upon his defence, except to notice one passage relative to Richard Carlile. In the commencement of his address he said, " I am not only charged in the opening speech of the learned counsel with having attempted to overthrow the constituted authorities of my country, but also to extinguish in the flame of infidelity the altar of our holy religion. It has been industriously promulgated that I was connected with Mr. Carlile ; it has been promulgated that I am a man of his principles. Where is the proof ? Without it why should the imputation have been cast ? I shall not advert to the conduct of that man, because the law has imposed its punishment upon him, and he is now enduring the reward of his temerity. It would, therefore, be improper, and imprudent and unjust for me in open court to touch upon such a subject, but why was the topic introduced ? I will tell you, gentlemen—to connect our cause with that of irreligion, and to identify the cause of the reformers with that of Mr. Carlile. I profess to be a reformer, but not a leveller ; I profess to be a lover of liberty, but not of licentiousness ; sweet, lovely liberty, gentlemen, is pure and amiable as sacred truth ; licentiousness is a disgraceful as darkness and falsehood." And then in a subsequent passage, he said, " You have heard the miserable attempt to fix upon me an irreligious connection with Carlile. I have known the man, and if I do not say

what I think of him, it is because he is now suffering the sentence of the law, and therefore is not a fit subject for anybody's animadversion. Of him I shall say nothing now, but I shall say that none of the principles, professions, or doctrines he is said to have espoused were ever, at any moment of my life, imbibed by or believed in by me. In the face of God and my country I most solemnly declare that I never read one line of the theological works of Carlile until Dr. Stoddart's libel upon me first put them into my hands in the following manner. Mr. Scarlett was then employed, as he is now, against me in the court of King's Bench. Carlile's trial was going on, mine was the very next, and I was bound to watch it, or else expose myself to the consequences of being absent when called on—a verdict for the defendant. Such was my unfortunate case, or else I should not have been in London, much less in court, when Carlile's trial was pending. I here further declare, in the face of heaven, that among the reformers, rich or poor, I never recollect to have seen one line of the theological works of Thomas Paine. Why, then, identify the reformers with such doctrines? Good God! was it not enough to charge us with crimes against our fellow-men, but that also we must be designated as infidels against our religion and our God."

Whilst Hunt uttered those last sentences the tears trickled down his face. "Good God!" I also mentally exclaimed, "Is it possible? are not my ears deceiving me?" Carlile, the reader will recollect, was one of those who went with Hunt in the carriage from Johnson's to the meeting on the morning of the 16th. He was so fortunate as to escape from the field, and had since been tried, found guilty, and sentenced to imprisonment for a theological work, if I mistake not; and was at the moment Hunt thus denounced and renounced him in prison. No human power, nor dread of human power, should have been able to compel Hunt to make use of such language at that time, and under those circumstances. Whatever Carlile was, good or bad, religious or the contrary, the law had for the present done its work with him, and that is seldom part done; and, above all other moments, that was

not the one to aim a clumsy and treacherous blow at a late comrade, now bound and fettered. "Can this," thought I, "be also one of the fashionable levities of great folks? If it be, it is requisite that I should be more guarded and more self-governed in future." And so I was; I continued to respect Hunt for his good points, but I was no longer entirely blinded to his faults. I never could forget this scene.

It was about the second or third day of the trial that, in cross-examination, I put what was considered a leading question. One of the counsel immediately called it back, and said that was not the proper way to put it. I apologised on account of my ignorance of the forms of examinations, when Serjeant Hullock, nodding his head, said, "a pretty apt scholar, however, I think."

One morning I observed that Mr. Scarlett was reading some verses of mine (the Lancashire Hymn) in a Manchester newspaper. In the evening, when I was passing along the corridor from the court, I accidentally joined Mr. Scarlett and Mr. Maule, the solicitor for the Government. They both recognised me respectfully, and I returned the salute. Mr. Scarlett said he had seen some verses of mine which were certainly open to comment by the prosecution, but he should not make any use of them to my prejudice. He also said he understood I had published a small poetical work, called "The Weaver Boy." I said I had. He then said, if it should so happen that I should have to come to London in consequence of the trial, he could wish me to bring him a copy. I said I would do so with pleasure, and if I did not come up, I would forward one to him. Mr. Maule said, "And let me have a copy also." I said I would take care he had one, and so with mutual civilities we parted.

After the defence was closed, and when Mr. Scarlett was making his speech in reply, I certainly felt more surprised than flattered by the distinction which he thought proper to make in my favour. "Bamford," he said, "and when he mentioned the name of that defendant, he could not but express his regret at the situation in which he saw him now placed; he (Mr. Scarlett) admired his talents and the respectful manner



in which he had conducted his defence, and probably others as well as himself (Mr. Scarlett) were sorry that he was not found in better company."

One day I had done something which pleased Hunt mightily, and when the court broke up and we were in the yard, Hunt said, "Come, Bamford, take my arm, you are my right-hand man." I took his arm, and we walked down the street with a great crowd at our heels, shouting "Hunt for ever! Hunt for ever!" and huzzaing. Looking back, I saw the judge's carriage with his lordship in, and the horses restive in consequence of the noise, and I put out my hand and desired the crowd to be silent. Hunt heard what I said, and, giving me a sudden jerk, began cursing in his usual wont when in a passion, and asked who ordered me to stop the people from shouting? I pointed to the carriage then in the midst of us, the horses still prancing; but that did not pacify my shout-loving friend, and he continued his maledictions until I turned to go to my lodgings. A similar cause of displeasure was given by Moorhouse on another night when the mail-coach was passing, and was in danger of being upset. Moorhouse received his reprimand at Hunt's apartments, and was then invited to walk out of the room. He wept with mortification! I laughed, as I have often done since, when thinking of the circumstance.

A female witness from Middleton, a married woman, gave very important evidence in a most impressive manner, and was to return home the following morning. Before going she wished to see Mr. Hunt, in order to have the honour of saying she had shaken hands with the great man. I offered to introduce her, and we went to Hunt's apartments, but he was not there, and we were referred to a tavern, the "Black Swan," I think, in Coney Street. We found there that Hunt, Bryant, and several others were upstairs, and I sent in my name, and after standing in the bar a short time the waiter said, "Mr Hunt could not be seen, he was engaged." I thought there must be some mistake, and requested the man to give my compliments to Mr. Hunt, and say I should be glad to see him for a minute. The man did so, and came down again with the same result,



I was ashamed and offended at receiving such a slight; but, determined that he should not have any ground to plead a misunderstanding, I desired the waiter to go up once more, and say a lady who was going into Lancashire wished to bid him good-bye. The servant very obligingly went up again and returned as before, "Mr. Hunt could not be seen." The next morning I took my seat at a distance from him in the court, and it was not until repeated overtures on his part, and many fervent expressions of regret, that I resumed conversation with him. But I could scarcely have justified myself if I had suffered any personal offence to alienate me from him during the trial. I considered the cause too great, too holy, to suffer injury in the least by any circumstance affecting one so humble as myself. I was, in fact, too simple-minded, too sincere, and too generous for the situation in which I was placed; and it was not until multiplied acts of deception and ingratitude had been practised upon me, that I learned (if I have yet done so) to value mankind according to their real worth. I narrate the above as a specimen of the intercourse and confidence which existed among us at York. The same really contemptible feeling of classism, the curse of England and Englishmen, and of Englishwomen also, existed in too great a degree amongst the witnesses. There were "the broad cloth" and "the narrow cloth" ones, the rich and the poor; and the former seldom sought opportunities for intercommunication with the latter, but rather shunned them. This "pride that licks the dust"—for it is nothing else—has begot a counteraction as wrong as itself. It has filled the working classes with a fierce contempt and hatred of every one wearing a decent coat. This latter is being as mad as the other is being mean. The proper course for those who feel and condemn class distinction, is, first of all, to respect themselves; next, to invite a respectful equality by unoffending manners; and thirdly, to assert their right position in society by withholding the smallest deference to mere assumption. This would be quite sufficient, without rudeness or noise, to restore the natural balance of society.

When the judge came to read over the evidence, the follow-

ing passage occurred : "The next evidence, (for the prosecution) was that which related to Bamford, and it only showed that he recommended peace and order ; still he was identified with the placards if they thought them illegal. If a meeting for considering a reform in Parliament be illegal, he is an offender, but it was his (the judge's) duty to tell them that it was not. There was no illegality in carrying sticks unless they were for an unlawful purpose—nor banners, unless their tenor was such as to excite suspicion of the objects of those who carried them, or concurred in bringing them with an evil intention. As to numbers, they alone did not make a meeting illegal, unless attended with such circumstances as did actually excite terror, or were reasonably calculated to excite terror ; such circumstances were forbidden by the law. They had truly heard that where there was no law there was no transgression ; if the meeting was innocently intended, then the law was not violated. We next come," observed his lordship, "to Healey's admonitory remark to me, to take care, and not in anything I say to prejudice your minds against him. If I do, gentlemen, discard any expression of mine having such a tendency altogether from your minds. I mean to do my duty with integrity, to the best of my poor judgment. If I err, and err with intention, then, gentlemen, there is that power to which I am awfully responsible. Between the crown on one hand, and my country on the other, I shall do, I hope, equal justice. The defendants, I trust, shall suffer no undue prejudice at my hands—my conscience will uphold me in what I have to say to you ; and He who will sit in judgment on all our poor acts will have to determine what motive dictated them. I have now closed my observations upon the evidence for the prosecution, and before I sum up that for the defence, I wish to state that I have made a summary of it, which will bring its leading points with less fatigue to your minds. If, however, I omit anything material to any of the defendants, or, as I go on, shall miss one fact in their favour, then it will only be necessary to remind me of the omission, and I will read in detail the part to which my attention is called."

Mr. Hunt: Probably you will allow us, my lord, to avail ourselves of your kind permission, as you go on, without deeming our interruption obtrusive?

Justice Bayley: Yes, Mr. Hunt, I not only allow you, but I desire you promptly, as I go on, to call my attention as you please.

The learned judge resumed his charge, and said that, "with respect to Bamford, all that had been proved in his speech was a recommendation to peace and order. There were no sticks in his group, save a few common walking-sticks, carried by old men. There were women and children in the throng, and it was for the jury to consider whether Bamford and these people, carrying their wives and daughters with them to such a crowd, meant to create on that day riot, tumult, and disorder? With such an intention nothing was less likely than that they would carry to the scene those who were the dearest objects of their affection. According to the evidence for Bamford, the people in his party, so far from being tumultuous, were peaceable and joyful, and the drilling, as it was called, so far from being illegal and nocturnal, was open and innocent; the only object of it being merely to enable the people to attend the meeting as conveniently for each other and the public as it was possible." The learned judge then enumerated the names of the witnesses who swore that the Middleton party, on the 16th of August, went to the meeting in the utmost peace, and conducted themselves whilst there with equal tranquillity. "There was no act of violence," said his lordship, "according to these witnesses, committed by them, no violation of peace, which would bring them under the reprehension of the law; and so far in favour of Bamford." And again, whilst commenting on the various flags, his lordship said, "with respect to Bamford, who went with the Middleton flags, nothing could be more decent than his conduct throughout the day. If the account given by the witnesses he adduced be a correct description, he everywhere recommended peace and order."

At a quarter past twelve the learned judge closed his charge, and the jury retired. Shortly before five they re-



turned into court, and the foreman read their verdict as follows:—

“Moorhouse, Jones, Wilde, Swift, and Saxton, not guilty. Henry Hunt, Joseph Johnson, John Knight, Joseph Healey, and (to the astonishment of the judge, the bar, and the audience) Samuel Bamford, guilty of assembling with unlawful banners, an unlawful assembly, for the purpose of moving and inciting the liege subjects of our sovereign lord the king to contempt and hatred of the government and constitution of the realm, as by law established, and attending at the same.”

Mr. Justice Bayley: Do you mean that they themselves intended to incite?

The Foreman: Yes.

Mr. Justice Bayley: Let the verdict be so recorded. You find, gentlemen, on such counts as the words of your verdict are applicable to. Do you find that they created terror, or incited it in the liege subjects of the king?

The Foreman: We mean, my lord, to find on the first count, omitting a few words.

The learned judge then requested they would retire and look over the counts of the indictment again, and say to which count they meant to apply their verdict.

The jury withdrew, and in a few minutes returned with a verdict of guilty generally on the fourth count, and not guilty on the remaining counts.

Mr. Justice Bayley: I take it for granted the defendants are still under recognizance?

Mr. Hunt: We are, my lord.

Mr. Justice Bayley: Then let them now additionally, in court, enter into their own recognizances to keep the peace and be of good behaviour for six months, Mr. Hunt in the sum of two thousand pounds, Mr. Johnson in one thousand, and Bamford and Healey in five hundred each.

The parties immediately gave their several recognizances.

His lordship addressing the jury, said they had his best thanks for the patient attention they had bestowed on this arduous trial. He was very much obliged to them. Then, facing the body of the court, his lordship added, “I very much



approve of the conduct of the court at the time the verdict was given in"—alluding, as was understood, to the universal silence which prevailed at the time.

The reader will perhaps not think that I speak too strongly when I say that the infamy of the verdict against myself has seldom been surpassed.

During the whole of the ten days' investigation I did not observe that any one of the jury took a single note of the evidence, or that they indicated by the action of a single muscle of countenance, that any impression was made on their minds. They sat motionless, and like men who were asleep with their eyes open ; and it was clear, from the bungling form in which they presented their first verdict, that they had agreed upon it from a vague recollection of some point in evidence, and a clumsy misapplication of the counts in the indictment.

In a short time after we had left the court I was somewhat surprised by the information that Hunt, Pearson, and Bryant were about to leave York that night. I therefore hastened to Mr. Pearson and represented to him that I had not any money whatever to pay my lodging and tavern bills, every farthing I had having been given up to Mr. Chapman. Mr. Pearson advanced me two pounds, and I went and discharged what I owed. The next morning the generous-hearted Moorhouse yoked up his coach and dragged a full load of witnesses and defendants to Huddersfield, where we stopped for the night. The following morning (Wednesday) Moorhouse found that, in consequence of the heavy load, he should want a pair of leaders to help him over the hills, and he applied at several places, but in vain ; no horse-keeper in Huddersfield would furnish us a pair for love or money ; and the Radicals of the place, indignant at the paltry annoyance, harnessed themselves to the vehicle, and drew it over the steep hills as far as Blackmoor Bottom. At Oldham our faithful and kind friends—alas, that so few of them remain !—met us, and conducted us to a good substantial dinner at the White Horse Inn. Here I was met by my dear wife and child, and our present joy was only saddened by the reflection that ere long there must be another parting. We were soon again in tender conversation by the

hedgerows and green fields; and I arrived at Middleton "poor in gear," but rich in the satisfaction of having performed my duty well; in having, though condemned, largely contributed towards the vindication of the conduct of the reformers on the 16th of August; in having created a feeling of respect in my enemies, and a favourable impression in the upright judge who tried us; in having disclosed to a great assemblage of wealth and aristocracy, as well as to the nation at large, that somewhat of moral and intellectual respectability had been attained by the artisans of Lancashire, whom on this occasion I represented. From that time they advanced a step in the grade of society; they were contemplated with a mingled feeling of curiosity and deference, and they were no longer considered as "the swinish multitude," "the base unwashed helots," nor denounced as the "dividers of property, and destroyers of social order."

If I did this, or any part of it, for my working fellow countrymen, I was entitled to their gratitude. We shall see ere long how that just claim was discharged; how they remembered one who, whilst pleading his own cause, had never forgotten theirs.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

HOW THE AUTHOR WAS ASSISTED WHEN HE WANTED IT—THE  
EMPTINESS OF POPULAR APPLAUSE—AUTHOR'S DEPARTURE  
FROM MIDDLETON—HIS CHILD—FAREWELL TO HIS WIFE.

THE terms of our recognizances were that we should appear in the Court of King's Bench on the first day of the ensuing Easter term, and not depart therefrom without the permission of the court. On the approach of that time, I therefore became anxious about the means whereby I should get to London. I should have been miserable if from any circumstance I had incurred a risk of not being in court when called, and had thereby forfeited the bail which my friends had given with me. My Radical acquaintances, however, never asked me when or how I was going, and I felt too much what was due to myself and my situation to throw out the least hint about the matter. One or two of the most sordid and ungrateful of my acquaintance, and God knows I had too many such, even told me that I needed not expect any assistance from them, even if I went to prison. I smiled in contempt, and replied that it would be time to deny me their assistance when I asked for it. Others there were who no doubt would have acted with an honourable considerateness had I made known to them my total want of funds for the journey, but I deemed it their place to ask me, and not mine to ask them. I could not but feel that I was about to be victimised on their account; I knew what was my duty, and was prepared to do it, but I would not condescend to remind them of theirs.

One day I was at Manchester, and in conversation about these matters I asked Mr. Evans, the editor of *The Observer*,

if there were any funds in the town which would be available in assisting the convicted parties to London? He said he had some money in hand belonging to the relief fund, and asked me how much I should want? I said I should think three pounds would be sufficient. He said I should have it, and if I would call on him a day or two before I set off he would pay it me. I called on him the week following, and he gave me three pounds. I purchased a pair of strong shoes, a pair or two of hose, and some other necessary articles, and then I went home and prepared in other respects for the journey.

It would be of no use to dwell on the hours of care, thoughtfulness, and anxiety on my part, nor of the regrets and tears which I tried to soothe and to suppress on behalf of my wife and child. Every one with a heart susceptible of our common human emotions will understand and appreciate their feelings and mine. Suffice it to say that when the last moment had been spent on my hearth, I started to my feet, threw my stick and bundle over my shoulder, locked the door, gave my wife the key, and with her on my arm, and my little girl by the hand, I took my way down Middleton and towards Manchester. I could not but reflect that when I went that way on the 16th of August there were ten thousand with me ready to shout, sing, or do whatever I requested; now, as if they were afraid I should want something from them, not a soul came forth to say "God be with you." One or two whom I saw on the road did, as they passed, ask if I was "going off," to which I replied by a nod. The words stuck in my throat, I was ashamed both for myself and them; ashamed of my past folly and of their present faithlessness. At the bottom of the town we parted from our dear child, telling her to go to a certain neighbour's (as had been previously arranged), and be a good girl, and her mother would bring her something from Manchester. She looked at us alternately, in tears, and then said, "And when will you come, father?" I stooped, kissed her, and said I would come soon, and, dashing the drops from my eyes, I gave my arm to her mother, and we ascended the hill in silence.

We stopped at Harpurhey, and whilst there a Middleton



man, a weaver, came into the place, and said he understood I was going to London; I told him I was, and he urged me to accept a shilling, as he understood I had come away with but little, if any, money. I thanked him, but refused to accept of it, alleging that I was better able to struggle with my difficulties than he was to spare a shilling from the wants of his large family. He then said that as he was coming through Middleton John Ogden, a shopkeeper, and a neighbour whom I well knew, told him I was before him, and he would probably overtake me; that I had gone away without asking for, or receiving a farthing, and that if he overtook me he was to give me the shilling (which he put into his hand) and request me to accept it from him. I said that altered the case; John Ogden was able to spare a shilling; I would therefore accept it, and he must give my thanks to the donor for his good and kind consideration. My neighbour then took a glass of ale and smoked a whiff or two of his pipe, and hurried to the warehouse at Manchester; and, reader, that shilling was the only Middleton coin which I had in my pocket when I started for London to receive judgment.

So much for the shouting, huzzaing, and the empty applause of multitudes. A young aspirant to public notoriety may be excused if he feel a little tickled with the shouts of adulation, but whenever I see a grey-headed orator courting such acclamations, I set him down as being either a very shallow or a very designing person. I have no patience with such hollow trumpery—with the fools who offer it, or the questionable ones who accept it.

We stopped at the house of a relative that night, and the next morning I left Manchester in company with my wife and my friend and late co-defendant, Thacker Saxton. At Stockport Saxton remained with some Radical friends whom he found there. My wife still lingered with me, after having often stopped and gone on again. At last we arrived at Stockport Moor; the afternoon was advanced, and the sun was descending.

“I saw the tear from her young eyes  
Affectionately starting,”

as my friend Spencer Hall has so beautifully expressed it ; and here was a final pause and parting—that is, I left her standing with her looks bent towards me, and there she remained till distance closed the view.

I now walked on at a quick pace, and had not gone many miles before I overtook a young man and his wife, who I soon learned were going to Macclesfield that night. I said I was going to that place, and somewhat further ; and when I told them of my destination, and that I intended to walk the journey, they were quite glad of my company, and we agreed to travel together. I soon learned they were going from Preston to Loughborough, where they intended to settle amongst the woman's relations. They were a very good-looking couple—he a stout, florid young fellow, and she a tall, handsome-featured woman ; she was also a good walker, which he was not, being already foot-sore.

On our arrival at Macclesfield my companions rested at a publichouse, whilst I went in search of some honest Radicals, to whom Saxton had given me letters of introduction. They were chiefly working men ; some of them were in pretty good circumstances, being master weavers. I soon found them, and they took myself and fellow travellers to a decent inn, where we got refreshment, and spent a very agreeable evening. In the morning, when our bill was called for, there was no charge against me, the kind friends who were with us the night before having settled everything which stood to my account.

We set off from Macclesfield about six o'clock on a lovely morning, and soon were in a finely variegated and wooded country, as any one will allow who has travelled betwixt Macclesfield and Leek. After walking some four or five miles we began to talk about breakfast, and my male companion said he would have cheese and bread and ale, whilst I anticipated a good breakfast of tea, with a couple of eggs, if they were to be had. Soon after the man stopped, and his wife said as we went forward, she was glad I preferred tea for breakfast. I asked her why, and she said her husband was a very hard-working man, and a good husband on the whole, but

he was a little too greedy, and expected her to fare as he did on the road, instead of letting her have a few indulgences, such as tea and coffee. It was not from want of money, she said, for he had enough with him, nor was it want of kindness to her—it was over-carefulness alone which made him so. But now, as I was for having tea, he would hardly for shame deny her having some also. I promised, if it was necessary, to put a word in for her, and she thanked me. Having travelled a little further we came to a neat little tap-house, on the descent of a valley, where the cool shadow of trees made the air grateful and refreshing, and a tiny wimpling rill ran like melted pearls over dark gravel, beneath young-leafed hazels, and by green-swarded margins. Here we agreed to stop and take what the house afforded. The smart-handed landlady soon placed a nice repast of tea, bread-and-butter, and a couple of eggs before me, whilst a jug of ale, with bread and cheese, were presented to my fellow-travellers. The woman said she could not eat, and I asked her to come and join me at tea, adding, very likely the cost would be little more for tea than for the breakfast they had before them. On hearing this opinion, her husband told her to get some tea, and then with great pleasure the woman came to my table and made a hearty breakfast.

We rested awhile at this pleasant little hostel ; the man and I (I might as well call him John at once) each smoked our pipe, with the window thrown up, and the cool breeze wafting around us. It was delicious to breakfast as we had done, and then to repose after a fine, health-creating morning's walk. John, however, I soon found, had not many conversational matters at his command. He was a plain, honest bricksetter ; knew something of the value of work in his line, could make out an estimate of the expense of buildings and such things, and those were the most of what he understood. Not so his wife, she was a sensible, well-informed woman for her station, and it was evident that on most subjects (except the purse-keeping) she was his superior, and exercised much influence over him. She had been, as she afterwards informed me, a servant at an inn at Loughborough, where the young bricksetter, then



on tramp, fell in love with and married her. They went down to Preston to settle amongst his friends; he was very wild and reckless, and one day he fell from some scaffolding and was shockingly maimed, so that he could never be so stout again as he had been. Latterly he had been more steady, and had saved a trifle of money, and as they had no children she had prevailed on him to return with her and live amongst her relations, and that was the cause of their journey.

At Leek we rested again during an hour, took some refreshment, and then resumed our journey towards Ashborne. In passing through the streets of Leek we noticed a number of weavers at their looms, and obtained permission to go into the weaving places and see them. The rooms where they worked were on the upper floors of the houses; they were in general very clean; the work was all in the silk small-ware line, and many of the weavers were young girls—some of them good-looking, most of them very neatly attired, and many with costly combs, earrings, and other ornaments of value, showing that they earned a sufficiency of wages, and had imbibed a taste for the refinements of dress. The sight of these young females, sitting at their elegant employment, producing rich borderings and trimmings, in good, well-aired, and well-finished apartments—some of them approached by stairs with carpets and oil cloths on them—the girls also being dressed in a style which two hundred years before would have been deemed rich for a squire's daughter, was to me very gratifying; whilst to my travelling companions it was equally surprising, and they expressed their feelings by sundry exclamations of astonishment.

The afternoon was very hot, and we walked slowly—that is, I and the woman did—for poor John was sadly hobbled with his sore feet and we had to keep sitting down and waiting on the road for him to come up. At length we gave him an hour's respite by stopping at a publichouse about four miles from Ashborne. It was almost dark when we entered that very clean and pleasant little town. At the first inn we went into we found accommodation, and, after partaking a good



warm supper, with some hearty draughts of old ale and pipes for a dessert, we sought that repose which had now become necessary.

The next morning we were up again early and continued my plan of travelling—namely, to walk a good stretch before breakfast. We sat down after walking about six miles; our meal was as good as we could wish—coffee and eggs for the woman and myself, and ale, cheese, and bread for friend John. We were now in a right farming country where large stacks, barns, and cattle-sheds were quite common on the roadsides. The roads were broad and in good condition, and there were very often wide slips of good land on each side, apparently much trodden by cattle. Occasionally we came to a neat, homely-looking cottage, with perhaps a large garden and a potato-ground attached, and with rose shrubs and honeybines clustering around the door. These were specimens of our real English homes; there was no mistaking them; in no other country do such exist, and he or she who leaves this land expecting to meet with like homes in foreign ones, will be miserably disappointed. In England alone is the term “home,” with all its domestic comforts and associations, properly understood. May it long continue the home of the brave, and eventually become the home of the really free!

We stopped but a short time at Derby; I visited, however, the grave of Jeremiah Brandreth, in St. Cuthbert's churchyard, and paid to the remains of that deluded victim a tribute of heartfelt emotion. I then joined my comrades and we hastened on, as well as John's feet would allow him, towards Shardlow. There he got into a cart, and the female and I walked on, promising to wait at Kegworth till the cart arrived. Some rain had fallen a few days before; the Trent had been flooded, and of all the verdant pastures I had ever beheld, none have surpassed the rich, vivid green of the meadows between Shardlow and Kegworth. It was refreshing to look upon them, and as the sweet air came across them, cooling one's dewy brows, one almost felt tempted to stop and seek an abiding-place in that delicious valley.

During our walk we had a very agreeable chat; I entered

into some particulars of my early life and into matters always interesting to females, namely, the histories of some tender attachments which I had formed, but which had lapsed, either through my own indifference, or, as I was pleased to suppose, the faithlessness of the objects I loved. This seemed to touch a tender chord in my companion, she was all attention, and when I paused, she put questions which compelled me to resume my narrative. I spoke of the noble and exalted pleasures of true affection, and pictured the sickening pangs of love betrayed, and the unhappiness which must eventually haunt the betrayer, whether man or woman. I repeated some verses of poetry, which heightened the picture, and at last, on looking aside, I found that her cheeks were glistening with tears. She now became more communicative, and informed me that she had somewhat to accuse herself of with respect to a young man, the first indeed whose addresses she had encouraged: that she now often thought she behaved coldly towards him without any just cause, and that, in consequence, the lad enlisted and joined his regiment before his friends knew what had become of him; that she soon afterwards was married, and he was killed in battle. Weeping freely, she added that at times she accused herself of having been the cause of his death. I consoled her as well as I could by the reflection that her conduct appeared to have risen more from youthful carelessness than want of feeling. She said he was an only child, and his mother was still living, and she thought if she could get settled down beside the old woman it would afford her some consolation to assist her and be a child to her in her old age. I approved of this with all my heart; and now, being at Kegworth, we stepped into a publichouse and awaited the arrival of the cart, which soon came up, and after a cup or two of ale betwixt John and myself, and a whiff of tobacco, we set forward, and a short journey through a pleasant neighbourhood brought us to Loughborough.

Nothing would satisfy my fellow travellers but my accompanying them to the house of the old folks, as they called them. I was not much averse to going with them, especially as I knew that I must stop somewhere in the town

all night. I accordingly accompanied them along several streets and turnings, until we were in a humble but decent-looking thoroughfare, when, knocking at the door, the woman in a whisper told me her parents lived there. A tall, venerable looking dame opened the door, and in a moment our female traveller was locked in her arms. A cheerful, clear-complexioned old man at the same time got up from his chair and shook John heartily by the hand, and on John mentioning me as a fellow traveller, he gave me a like frank reception. He then embraced his daughter, and when the first emotions of tenderness were over, we sat down to a very comfortable but homely refection, and the family party became quite cheerful and communicative. Meantime the news had got abroad amongst the neighbours, several came in, and in a short time we were joined by a fine-looking girl, a younger daughter of the old folks, who had been at work in one of the manufactories. In short, we had a joyful family and neighbourly meeting; liquor was sent for, a young fellow tuned up his fiddle, and the old couple led off a dance, which was followed by others; liquor was brought in abundance, and the hours flew uncounted.

John and I and the old man were seated in a corner smoking and conversing, when I observed the younger sister come in somewhat fluttered. She took the old mother and her sister aside, and by the expression of their countenances and the motion of her hands, I perceived that something troublesome and mysterious had occurred. In fact, she was explaining to them, as I afterwards learned, that in going to the publichouse for more liquor she had to pass a stage-coach which was stopped, and that on looking up she saw a young soldier getting off the coach, with his knapsack slung on one shoulder and a foraging-cap pulled over his face, but she saw enough to convince her that he was Robert—the same who once courted her sister and who they had heard was killed in battle. This news, as may be imagined, was soon known in the house, and caused a great sensation, particularly amongst the women. We had just learned the cause of their whisperings, when the door opened and a young fellow, pale,



slender, and well formed, wearing regimentals and an undress cap, and with a knapsack properly adjusted, stepped respectfully into the room and, seeing the old woman, he put out his hand and took hers and spoke to her affectionately, calling her mother. She gazed a moment on his face, as if incredulous of what she beheld. The company had drawn in a half circle at a distance around them; John, myself and the old man kept our seats, the younger sister stood beside her mother, and the married one was on a low seat behind her.

"I scarcely know what to say to you, Robert," said the old woman. "I am glad to see you have escaped death, for your mother's sake, but I almost wish you had not called here to-night."

"And why not, mother? my *other* mother," he said, trying to force a smile. "Why not call at a house where I left friends, and mayhap a little of something more than friendship?"

"Nothing beyond friendship now, Robert," said the mother, endeavouring to appear cool.

"Why, where is Margaret?" he said; "I hope nothing has befallen her?"

"Margaret is your friend," said the old woman, "but she is nothing more now. Yonder sits her husband," pointing to John.

John advanced towards the young man and took his hand, and, looking towards Margaret, said he believed she had been his wife about two years.

The soldier trembled, and staggered to a seat.

Margaret got up and gave her hand to the young soldier, saying she welcomed him home with all the regard of a sister. She was now married, as he had heard, and was about to settle in Loughborough, and if he had never returned, his old mother should not have wanted the tender offices of a child whilst she lived.

"Thank you, Margaret," he said; "that is some consolation; you wouldn't neglect my old mother, I know." He put his hand over his eyes and burst into tears.

"I would not, Robert," she said, "and if in former times I



did not value you as perhaps you deserved, I was willing to make the only atonement I could by cheering the drooping years of your supposed childless parent."

"That is very good!" "very fair on both sides!" "very handsome!" said a number of voices. Neither of the interested parties spoke, they were both deeply affected.

The old woman and youngest daughter then conducted Margaret into another room. The old man shook hands with the soldier and endeavoured to cheer him. Meantime, information had been conveyed to Robert's mother, and she now entered the room, shaking and leaning on a stick. The meeting was most tender; it was such as could only take place betwixt a parent and child equally affectionate. The dancing had at first been given up; a warm, substantial supper was in a short time spread on the board; Robert and his mother took some of the refreshment and then went home. Margaret did not make her appearance. Shortly after supper I was conducted to lodgings at an inn, and spent most of the night in confused dreams of the strange scenes which, like those of a romance, had passed before me.

The following morning I breakfasted at the old folks, according to promise. I asked not any question, nor did I hear anything further. Margaret's eyes appeared as if she had been weeping. John was attentive to her, and she seemed as if she valued his attentions, but could not entirely cast the weight from her heart. I left the family, to pursue my way, and John accompanied me as far as Quorn, where we parted, and I never saw him afterwards.

I merely walked through Mountsorrel, and leaving Rothley on my right, where many Knights Templars lie interred, I pushed on to Leicester, where, having spent the remainder of the day in looking at various antiquities, particularly the chamber in which Richard III. slept on the night previous to the battle of Bosworth, and the bridge over which his dead body was thrown on its return, I took up my abode for the night at a respectable looking little pot-house. Here I met with excellent accommodation, and enjoyed the lively conversation of some stocking-weavers, who, when they learned

from whence I came and the share I had borne in Lancashire politics, would almost have carried me in their arms.

The following morning I pursued my journey, and passing through a fine country, consisting of sheep pastures and arable land, I dined at Market Harborough, and in the afternoon went on to Northampton.

I scarcely knew where to apply for lodgings; there were so many snug-looking publichouses that I was spoiled with choice. At length I entered one of the said neat-looking places and asked a decent elderly woman if I could have lodgings there. She frankly said at once that I could not, they were full of soldiers; and, in fact, I had seen a large number on parade as I came through the town. I asked if she could direct me to a place, and she pointed to a respectable looking house a little higher in the street. I went there, but received the same reply; they were "full of soldiers," and I learned that the latter were but just come into the town and were on their march to Liverpool, for Ireland. I now was directed to a publichouse where coachmen and guards stopped, and where many travellers were in the habit of resting. It was getting late and almost dark, and I determined not to be shuffled out of this next place by any pretence. I entered a rather handsome bar parlour, where a numerous company was sitting, apparently farmers, who were taking their pipes and glass, after the fair or market. I asked the landlady, a smart but unassuming woman, if I could have a bed for the night. From the moment I entered she had been eyeing me over, and seeing, as I suppose, my shoes all dust, and myself a brown, and not a very polished-looking customer, she said she was very sorry, but there was not a bed to spare in the house, so many soldiers had brought billets that they were quite full. I drew my hand across my brows, looked at my feet, rather feelingly, and requesting she would serve me with a pint of ale, I sat down. The ale was brought, and I gave it a hearty pull, and then asked for a pipe and tobacco, which were placed before me. My next order was for something to eat, intimating that a chop or a steak, with a hot potato, would be preferred. Meantime, I drank up my ale and called for another

pint, and sat smoking and chatting with the farmers quite in a comfortable way. When they heard I came from Lancashire they made many inquiries as to late events and present prospects, and I told them all they required so far as my information went, and as candidly and fairly as my judgment enabled me, and we became very agreeable company. When my supper was brought in I despatched it with a hearty relish, and then, having ordered some brandy and water, I called the landlady to receive my shot, observing that it was time I should look out for lodgings—for I wished to try what fair means would do first. “Oh!” she said, “make yourself comfortable, young man; you seem to be very good company, and we’ll make you a bed somehow or other, you shall see.” “Another glass, sir, did you say?” asked the maid, who stood at her mistress’s elbow. I nodded assent, and thus got installed for the night, and had a most excellent lodging.

I have been the more circumstantial in narrating this transaction, inasmuch as it contains a useful intimation to foot travellers. I have never since, save on two occasions, tried the experiment of getting lodgings at a publichouse in the way I put the question on this night, and on those occasions I took the plan more from curiosity than any other motive. A foot traveller, if he is really desirous to obtain lodgings, should never stand asking about them. He should walk into a good room—never into the common tap-room—put his dusty feet under a table, ring the bell pretty smartly, and order something to eat and drink, and not speak in the humblest of tones. He will be served quickly and respectfully—that is, if those two things happen to be understood at the house. After his repast he should take his pipe or cigar if he be a smoker, and whether he be or not, he should drink, chat, and make himself quite at ease until bed-time, when all he has to do will be to call the chambermaid and ask her to light him to bed. That will be done as a matter of course, and he will probably have saved himself a tramp round the town in search of lodgings, and probably, after all, the making of his own bed under a manger or in a hay-loft.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

STOKE GOLDINGTON—AN IMPORTANT FUNCTIONARY—A BETRAYED ONE—A COUNTRY ALEHOUSE—AN ALARM—A SUDDEN DEPARTURE—A MAGISTRATE AND HIS CLERK—AN ACQUITTAL—A WEDDING.

AT six o'clock the following morning, the weather still delightful, I left Northampton. With feelings of veneration I stopped to admire the fine old cross, as it is called, erected on the spot where the body of Eleanor, Queen of Edward I., rested on its way to London. Near this place, as I was informed by a finger-post, the road to Needwood Forest diverged, and I longed for an opportunity to range through these interesting haunts of our English yeomen of old, but my imaginative wanderings were soon checked by the information which a countryman gave me, that the forest lands were nearly all enclosed.

At a little quiet, retired publichouse on the Northampton side of Stoke Goldington I stopped for breakfast. I chose to halt here for two reasons : the first, because I wished to pay my respects to a worthy old couple, if they were still living, and the second, because I had walked about eleven miles, and was hungry. When, in my nineteenth year, I was absconding from a ship at London, weary, exhausted, and anxious lest I should be pressed, I called at nightfall at this publichouse, then kept by a decent elderly man and his wife with several children. I was in my sailor's dress, with but little money in my pocket, and I told the good folks my situation. They could not find me a bed in the house, but they took pity on me, and shook me down some good clean straw in an out-building,



where, with the ducks for my companions in one corner, and the fowls in the other, I spent a night of sleep that might have blessed a king. The kind people also gave me a breakfast of milk and bread in the morning, and when very gratefully and willingly I offered payment, they refused to receive anything. I could not therefore pass their door without calling to thank them, but I found them not there; they were both, I believe, dead, and the people now at the house knew nothing about the circumstance which had made me a debtor to their predecessors.

Whilst I sat enjoying my repast, a portly country-looking personage, with an air of some authority, came into the kitchen where several others were. He was followed by a neatly and plainly attired young woman, who sat down at a respectful distance, and seemed to shun observation. I soon learned from the tenor of his conversation with the landlord that he was a kind of deputy-constable in some of the neighbouring townships, and that the young woman was going with him before a magistrate, on a charge which would send her to prison, for having become a mother without producing a legitimate father for her offspring. This was enough to interest me in behalf of the girl, even had not the coarse jokes of the constable and one or two others excited my disgust and strong aversion. I once or twice put in a word of a civil and rather exculpatory tendency, for which I almost got laughed at by the men, but was repaid by the modest and grateful looks of the poor girl. The son of the squire's coachman had, as I understood, been courting the damsel two or three years, but when she was in a way for bringing a charge upon him, he had nearly ceased visiting her, and had entirely given over talking about marriage. These circumstances, which to the young woman must be matters of deep affliction and shame, were to the country boors subjects for scornful and bitter joking, all of which she bore very meekly and, what made me think better of her, with a good sense and self-respectful manner which prevented her from making the least reply. She sat with her head not entirely downcast, but with an air of shame, indignation, and repentance, whilst blushes,

paleness, and tears, were alternately visible on her cheeks. I ardently wished for an opportunity for getting her out of the hands of these ruffians, and particularly of the one who had charge of her, and as I had learned the constable and she were going my way, I determined to avail myself of any chance for that purpose. I therefore fell to cultivating a good opinion with the functionary; I gave him some tobacco, and my glass to drink from, and in a short time he was telling about the numerous perils he had gone through in his apprehension of thieves, poachers, and trespassers; on the sound judgment his office required, and the courage and activity he had on sundry occasions displayed, whilst I wondered how so rare a constable could have remained so long in a humble country situation. At length he must go, and as he said he should be glad of my company as far as we went, we all three left the public-house.

We had not got far ere a young fellow, apparently a farm labourer, climbed over a stile from the fields and joined us. He was going to a doctor, he said, having had his face, some weeks before, injured by a young colt kicking him. His head and features were bandaged so that none of them were visible save his eyes and part of his nose. He walked with us, saying very little, but occasionally sighing, as it were from pain. I observed the young woman glancing rather doubtfully towards him once or twice, but neither she nor the constable seemed to know him. After walking some distance the constable said he had to turn off across the fields to a village. He said I might as well go that way, as the foot-road led into the highway again, and was as short, and there was an excellent tap at the alehouse, where we could have a glass after his business was done. I agreed, for I wanted to see something more of this affair, and so I stepped with him, his prisoner, and the young man into the meadow path—for the doctor also lived in the same village. We soon arrived at the little hamlet, and the constable inquired of a servant in livery if "his worship was at home?" He said he was, and would be downstairs in half an hour, and if he called then he would see him. We stepped into a publichouse, where we ordered some ale, and

having found it very good, we began to smoke, having agreed, very philosophically, that it was the wisest course to "take things easy in this world." We had sat thus, blowing clouds for some time, and going on our second jug, when the young fellow came suddenly into the room, and, gazing wildly, said a person was killed just above, and the doctor had sent him for a constable, as they could not remove the body until one arrived. Our active officer then, potent with ale and authority, laid down his pipe, pulled out his staff, took a huge draught, and charging me with the custody of the young woman until he returned, he hurried out of the house. As soon as he had disappeared, "here," I said to the girl, "take that shilling, and run for thy life." The young fellow at the same time pulled his bandages from his face; a scream burst from the girl, he laid hold of her arm, I turned to light my pipe, and the next instant they had disappeared.

I then hastened up the lane in search of my active coadjutor, and met him coming down swearing and brandishing his truncheon. "Where are they?" I said, for I thought I would be first to speak. "Where are who?" he asked. "Why the young Jezebel and that fellow with the broken face?" "Where are they?" he repeated, glaring on me with his two eyes as if they would have started from his head. "Where are they indeed?" "You should know where one is at least." I then told him in a somewhat deprecatory tone that I only turned to the fire to light my pipe, and when I looked again both the prisoner and the young fellow were gone. "But you are not gone at any rate," he replied, "nor shall you go until you have been before the justice to answer for this. Come along," he said, "come this way," and laying hold of my arm he reconducted me to the publichouse. "Heigh ho!" I said, "there's nothing like taking things easy in this world." "D—— you and your easiness," he retorted, quite in a rage. "John," he said to the ostler, "go and see if his worship is astir yet." John went and soon returned with the tidings that his worship was ready. My conductor and I then went into the house of the worthy magistrate, and were met at the yard door by a set of very cross



pointers and cock-dogs, who made a general assault as if they would have worried us, and myself in particular, for they seemed to have barked at my companion before. We were conducted into a neat carpeted room, where his worship and his clerk sat at a table covered with a green cloth, and with a number of papers and writing materials before them. "Well, Andrew!" said the clerk, a thin, sallow, suspicious-eyed person, "where is the girl you were to bring?" "Lord bless his honour's worship," said Andrew, "I left her in the custody of this here man and he's let her run away." "How's that?" asked his worship, lifting his eyes from a Game Act which he had been perusing. "How did you come to leave her in this man's charge? I thought you had been an older officer and had known better than that," said his worship. "May it please your honour's worship," said the constable, "I and the girl and this said prisoner, that now is, were awaiting your honour's pleasure in the publichouse, when in comes a scurvy knave as was awaiting o' the doctor, and said there was a person killed, and I must go and take charge of the corpse; so I 'livered my prisoner into this man's charge, and away I went arter the corpse, and when I had run up and down o' the village, I couldn't hear o' no corpse, and the people all, sir, a-laughing at me."

The clerk gave a dark and bitter frown, the magistrate burst out a-laughing heartily. I laughed too; in fact, I had been doing so in my mind during the last half hour. When the clerk saw the magistrate laugh he was suddenly taken with a like cheerful sensation, and we all three laughed at Andrew, the constable.

"Well," said the magistrate, composing himself, "but what has this to do with the loss of your prisoner?"

"Please your honour," said the constable, "before I went a-seeking the corpse I left the girl in charge of this man, who I believe is no better than he should be, and when I came back he tells me the girl had run away whilst he was a-lighting of his pipe."

"How was it?" asked the magistrate, addressing me. I gave him the same account I had given the constable, on



which he first, and then the clerk, burst into a hearty fit of laughter, to the apparently sore puzzlement of the constable, who seemed to think it a subject of too grave a nature for such light entertainment.

"What do you wish his worship to do in this case, Andrew?" asked the clerk.

"I wish his honour would send this here man to jail instead of the girl," was the reply.

"Can we do that?" asked the magistrate, half serious, half joking.

"We can hold him in sureties if Andrew undertakes to prefer a bill against him at the assizes," was the reply in the same strain.

"Let it be done then," said his worship. "Andrew, you will be bound in a bond of fifty pounds to prosecute this charge at the next assizes."

"Please your honour's worship, I'd rather be excused," said Andrew, looking alarmed. "Who's to pay expenses?"

"I rather think the prisoner won't pay, at any rate," said his worship; "those who prosecute will have the first chance of that."

"Then I couldn't do it," said the constable; "I'd rather not have any hand in the affair."

"Is the man to be discharged then?" asked the magistrate.

"Yes, if your honour pleases," said the constable; "I don't like them ere bonds."

The magistrate then asked me what I was and where I came from, and I told him I was a weaver and came from Lancashire.

He asked me where I was going to and for what purpose, and I told him I was on my way to London in expectation of getting a place.

Had I relatives in London, and what sort of a place did I expect to obtain? I said I had not any relatives in London, but I had some good friends, and I had little doubt of getting a situation under Government.

"Under Government," said he, with surprise; the clerk also elevated his eyebrows.

"Yes, sir," said I, half laughing; "I'm going up in expectation of a Government place."

"The man is *non compos*," said the magistrate in an undertone.

"Very likely, sir," replied the clerk.

"You are discharged, then," said the magistrate. "We can't do anything with you unless there be an undertaking to prosecute."

I bowed respectfully to his worship, gave the clerk a questionable smile, and quitting the room, I made the best of my way to the publichouse, where I had left my bundle and stick.

Another person had come in whilst we were away, and the landlady had told him about the girl running off and my being taken prisoner. This person was an attorney's clerk, and he took up my cause earnestly, and advised me to prosecute the constable for a false imprisonment. He was giving me that advice when the constable returned. I pretended to entertain the project, and when the official became aware of the subject on which we were deliberating, he became very uneasy, and seemed almost willing to make any compromise rather than be under the clutches of the other "limb of the law." At length, after I had sufficiently tormented him, I agreed to a settlement, the terms of which were that he should pay for a quantity of ale, I and the attorney's clerk, whom I found to be a queer, ironical fellow, agreeing to pay for as much to come in after his was drank.

We had sat here rather a considerable time, and had got into high good humour with each other and the liquor, when the sounds of voices and a fiddle were heard approaching the house, and in a minute after in walked the girl we had prisoner in the morning, arm in arm with a young fellow, who, by his speech and dress, we recognised as the one with the patched face; in short, they were the two runaways, followed by some half a dozen young men, two young women, and an elderly person fiddling. They had been at church and had got wed, the banns having been published there some months before. They were now all ready for dancing, singing, and

mirth; I scarcely ever saw a set of happier-looking countenances; the lad was in raptures; the bride seemed to have more self-command than any in the place. She thanked me most gratefully for the kindly feelings I had evinced; her husband joined her, and I found it of no use offering to break up from the wedding party. The constable was quite reconciled, as the charge, he said, would be taken off the township, and the ratepayers would deem it no bad day's work of his. The attorney offered his friendly services in reconciling the squire's coachman to the match, and the landlady brought in a posset of spiced ale for the wedding feast. The fiddler rosined his bow afresh, and played up a jig that set all the lads a-capering. In short, we ate and drank and danced the afternoon away. Evening followed, night came, and then the noon of night; and the last scenes I committed to memory were the fiddler falling from his chair and smashing his viol, and the attorney painting the constable's face delicately with a blacking-brush whilst the latter person was fast asleep.

The next morning I was at Newport Pagnel at an early hour. The place had a most romantic appearance as I approached it. There must have been heavy rains upwards, for the Ouse had overflowed its banks, and numerous cattle were grazing on small green islets surrounded by the flood. The weather continued all that a foot traveller could wish, and I walked on leisurely, enjoying the cooling breeze, the odour of flowers, and the music of birds some six or eight miles until I arrived at the celebrated village of Woburn, where I stepped into the first publichouse I came to on the left-hand side—I think it was the sign of the “Bedford Arms.” The place seemed very fine, and the people I saw moving about looked, I thought, in a strange supercilious way at me; none of them stopped to ask what I wanted. At length I desired a woman to bring me a glass of ale, intending it as a preliminary to breakfast. She did not pause a moment to receive my order, but looking down, swept past me. “Bless us,” I thought, “what sort of a publichouse have I got into now?” No one attended to me, and soon after I asked again for a glass of ale; this servant also went away without speaking, but in a short time



a female of a superior appearance came and said they did not entertain foot travellers. I expressed my surprise at that, and assured her I was both able and willing to pay for whatever I called for. She said she did not doubt it, but it was an invariable rule of the house not to serve persons travelling on foot, and the rule could not be departed from. Could I not have a draught of ale? I asked. No, foot travellers could not have anything there. I accordingly rose, and replacing my bundle on my shoulder, I begged her to inform her employer that the rule of the house might bring trouble and humiliation sometime, inasmuch as, if other engagements did not press me, I would go before the nearest magistrate, or the Duke of Bedford himself, and prefer a complaint against the occupier for refusing to entertain a traveller without sufficient cause. She smiled at my law (as well she might, having scanned my appearance, and thence formed an opinion of my purse), and said there were other places in the village where I might have whatever refreshment I wanted; and then, probably thinking she had wasted time enough on me, she turned and walked off, and I came out of that inhospitable and pride-infected place. At another inn I met with a reception the very reverse of the first; the people, both landlord and servants, were very obliging and attentive. I made a good breakfast, rested, chatted, and received an invitation to call there again if I came that way.

I wonder whether the people of the Duke's Arms are yet in business? and if they are, whether, like scores of their arrogant brotherhood, they have not been so far humbled by those great levellers, the railways, that if a wayfaring man now enters their house he can have a cup of ale for money?

I walked to Redburn to dinner, which consisted of a plain but delicious repast at a very humble pothouse. Here I remarked a horseshoe nailed inside the weather board of the door, and on my pretending ignorance of its purpose, and asking what it was for, an old wrinkled dame, seemingly the mother of the household, told me with perfect seriousness that it was to keep all witches and bewitched persons and things out of the place, and that so long as it remained there nothing under the influence of witchcraft could enter.



At St. Albans I walked amid the ruins of the old Abbey, having previously passed a fragment of a wall in the meadows below, undoubtedly a part of the remains of the British city of Verulam. I lingered rather long with these scenes, and it was getting dark when I passed the Obelisk at Barnet, where the famous battle was fought in the Wars of the Roses. Every step I advanced to-day, the people, their houses, and their manners, became more Londonish ; and it will not then appear surprising that at the first publichouse I went into I was made welcome to comfortable quarters, and so remained there during the night. The next morning I walked into London, and took my breakfast at a coffee-house.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

A CRUISE AMONGST THE BOOKSELLERS—VISIT TO MR. HUNT—  
LONDON POLITICIANS AND JURY REFORM—A PAINFUL DIS-  
COVERY.

My next business now was to examine the state of my purse, which was speedily done, and found scarcely able to make a jink, however shaken. My next consideration was how to set about replenishing it. I had, in contemplation of some such dilemma as the present, brought with me from Lancashire some manuscript poems, which I felt pretty confident of being able to sell for a decent sum, should I be in want of money during my stay in London. I was already in want of it, or about to be, and I was thus driven to my last resource the first day of my arrival. I wished to raise some money immediately, in order that I might be enabled to redeem some things which I had directed to be sent by the carrier, and be thereby enabled to appear before my friends in a respectable garb.

I therefore inquired my way to Ave Maria Lane, and went into a great publishing establishment there; but, without waiting to see my productions, they told me they could not do anything with poetry. At another place, in Paternoster Row, I could not see the great man because I had not a letter of introduction. I went down Ludgate, and into the shop of William Hone, but he was out of town. At a shop in the Strand the brown paper enclosure of my effusions was first opened, a glance given at the contents, myself scanned over, and the writings returned, with an assurance that "It wouldn't take." At a grand place in Oxford Street the shopmen stood

laughing at me, as I verily believed, under pretence of being diverted by my Lancashire rhymes ; and at a similar establishment in one of the wide streets beyond Charing Cross I received the comfortable advice to return home and remain at my loom. Alas ! I thought, I wish I could return home.

I had now enough of the poet's trade, at least for one day, of—

“The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,”

and, wearied and disappointed, I turned my footsteps towards the lodgings of my friend Hunt, at Mr. Giles's, in Wych Street. To be sure the booksellers were not entirely blamable ; my appearance was, no doubt, somewhat against me. My clothes and shoes were covered with dust, my linen soiled, and my features brown and weathered like leather ; which circumstances, in consideration with my stature, and gaunt appearance, made me an object not of the most agreeable or poetical cast. Still, I thought these booksellers must be very owls at mid-day not to conceive the possibility of finding good ore under a rude exterior like mine. And then I bethought me—and comforted myself therewith, inasmuch as others had trodden the same weary road before me—of Otway, and Savage, and Chatterton, and of the great son of learning, as ungainly as myself—Samuel, the lexicographer—and, I might have added, of Crabbe, and others of later date, but their names had not then caught my ear. And thus, musing as I went, and chewing bitters until they almost became sweets, I once more found myself in the shop of Mr. Giles, the bread baker, in Wych Street.

I asked for the good old man, and a plump, short-statured lady in mourning advanced from an inner room. I saw in a moment that she was Mrs. Giles, and, smitten with a saddening thought, I ventured to ask for her husband. She informed me civilly, but not in that friendly tone I had been accustomed to there, that Mr. Giles was dead, that she was keeping the business on, and that Mr. Hunt had removed to an address which she gave me, in Charlotte Street, Oxford Street.

The afternoon was far advanced, when, after traversing a

part of the town I had never seen before, I knocked at the door of a very respectable looking house, and asked for Mr. Hunt, and on sending up my name was instantly admitted. I had not long been in the house before a very respectable repast of bread, butter, and a beverage made from roasted corn was set before me, and I partook of it with a relish, though I was never very fond of "corn coffee"; but as we all know, "hunger is the best sauce." Many questions of course were asked on both sides, and matters were discussed; and after conversing about an hour, as night was setting in, I took up my bundle and stick, received a hearty shake of the hand, with an invitation to "come to-morrow"—"come any time." And so, bidding my friend and his family good evening, I left the house and turned into the street, to go I knew not whither.

"This is not the way," thought I, "in which I treat my friends from a distance when they call upon me in Lancashire. I should not have let Mr. Hunt leave my dwelling, humble as it is, without knowing whither he was going, and how he was to be entertained." But then came the old excuse, "It is the way of great folks," "one of the peculiarities of London," and so forth; and cogitating on this and various other matters, I retraced my steps, as well as I could find my way, to Mrs. Giles's, in Wych Street.

I thought the widow seemed more friendly after I had expressed disappointment at my visit to Mr. Hunt. I asked her if there was a decent tavern in her neighbourhood which she could recommend as a comfortable place for lodging. She expressed entire ignorance of any of them, but said one of the journeymen could possibly inform me; and she called one, who recommended a house in Newcastle Street, close by, as a suitable and likely place for stopping at. She sent him to inquire if they could lodge a person from the country, and in a short time he returned, saying I could have a very good bed there if I chose. I accordingly went with the man, who showed me the house, and I entered the public room, and, taking my seat at a table opposite the boxes, I ordered a pint of beer, as they call it, and bread and cheese for my supper.



I had finished my repast, and sat smoking, when three or four persons entered the room, and commenced a conversation which became animated. They were, as I soon learned, some of the London politicians of the working class, and the subject was the English jury system. It was, if I mistake not, the approaching trial of Thistlewood and his companions which led to this discussion. One party would have it that the English jury was one of the most complete inventions which human wisdom could have accomplished, and they lauded it as fervently, and with about as much sense, as a certain class of politicians are in the habit of lauding our "glorious constitution," a thing which exists in imagination only. Another party thought that the system was faulty, and instanced the packing of juries, and a third party thought the verdict should go according to the majority. I sat listening attentively, but did not interfere, until at last one of the speakers asked my opinion of the subject in dispute.

I frankly confessed that I differed from the whole of them, and thought the English jury one of the most bungling pieces of judicial machinery which could have been put together, and I noticed several instances of its clumsy and imperfect operation within my own knowledge, not, however, mentioning the late trial at York. I asked how it could be otherwise, seeing the manner in which jurymen were selected. In the country I came from I said they were generally men who had just the brute instinct of beavers, to scrape a little substance together and to keep it, but who for all other purposes were far behind their neighbours; and infinitely so in qualifications necessary for deciding betwixt right and wrong, guilt and innocence. A time would come, as I ventured to suppose, when that piece of old trumpery would be done away with altogether; meanwhile I would, had I the power, endeavour to render it more useful by ordering, in a legal way, that all jurymen should be elected by ballot in each township, that their appointment should be annulled at the will of those who appointed them, that property should not qualify, that five, seven, or nine should be the number, and a majority should carry a verdict, that all juries, whether grand juries, coroner's

juries, or leet juries, should be taken from this body, and that they should be paid from county or other rates, independent of the crown. This plan was generally approved of, and I should have been honoured with a speech or two in compliment, but happily the girl came with the chamber candle, and so bidding my London patriots good night, I retired from their company.

After ascending several heights of stairs, I demurred, and asked the girl how much further upwards we must go? She begged pardon, and said the bed intended for me was on the second floor, and had been occupied by a lodger during a fortnight; he had gone away and they did not expect him that week, but he had suddenly returned and claimed his old bed. Against this I could not adduce any argument, especially as it was too late to go out that night, and so, following my guide, I climbed to the uppermost floor of the house. I looked at the apartment, which did not please me very well; it was of no use, however, beginning then to be very nice, and so I threw down my bundle and stick, whilst the girl, with the candle in her hand, reminded me that it was customary for strangers to pay before going to bed. "Oh! very well," I said; "how much is it?"—not thinking the charge would be more than sixpence at most. "Eighteenpence, if you please, sir," said the girl. I put my hand hastily into my pocket, and pulling out all the money I had, I counted it, and found it to be just a penny short of the demand, namely, one shilling and fivepence. "Well, lass," I said, "this is all the money I have in the world, and it is a penny too little," and I looked, as much as to say, "Will it do?" "Never mind, sir," she replied; "you will be calling some day in going past, and you can give the penny to master or mistress." I said I would do so, and the girl then bidding me good night, left the room.

I had never slept on so mean a bed as was presented on my turning down the clothes. I had slept for weeks on old sails in the half-deck of a ship, or in the cable tier, and slept comfortably, but I had never lain on anything that looked and smelled so filthy as the narrow, hard couch now before me. I, however, threw myself upon it and wooed forgetfulness, in order to escape from disgust, but there was such a racket on

the other side of the partition as for a long time forbade all repose, and convinced me that I had got into a not very respectable house. When at last all was still and I was beginning to sleep, the peaceful charm was broken by the entrance of a drunken soldier, who rolled into another bed, and kept me awake by narrating various sprees, as he called them, in which he had been engaged during the day. At length he also became oblivious, and his very welcome snore informed me that I was at liberty to sleep if I could. The "sweet restorer" soon came, and when I awoke in the morning my noisy companion was gone, probably to attend an early parade."

I was not long in dressing, as may be supposed. I merely coaxed the holes in my stockings a little lower, and turned my neck-kerchief the cleaner side out, and my embellishments were finished. There was no water or towel in the room, and I would not make free with soldier Jack's blacking, as I had nothing to satisfy his demand should he return and make one. I therefore slipped on my shoes and clothes, dusty and soiled as they were the night before, and grasping my trusty cudgel and my bundle, I sallied from the room, wishful to get a breath of sweet air, if there were any such in London. As I passed along a kind of landing, a door opened just before me, and out stepped, as quietly as an old hen off her perch in a morning, as demure a looking piece of purity as the world ever exhibited. As she turned to go down the stairs I caught a glance of her face. She was almost forty years of age, with rather agreeable features, modest and humble looks, as if she had been at prayers, and was dressed in second mourning of the most devout cut. "A mother in Israel," indeed, would that frail dame have passed for. As I followed her towards the door I really felt in a degree ashamed at being seen coming out with her. I involuntarily turned towards the lady as she went away, and at that moment she gave me a look which spoke as plainly as a look could speak what was her unfortunate vocation.

I sauntered down into the Strand, and turned towards Charing Cross, not that I had any business in that direction, but I thought a man without money might as well go one way



as another in London. I was half inclined to believe also that the people I met seemed as if they knew I was penniless. After wandering an hour or so, looking in at the shop windows, and gazing at whatever was new, I retraced my steps on the other side of the street, with the view of calling at the office of *The Black Dwarf*, and a faint hope of receiving an invitation to breakfast. Mr. S. was very glad to see me, and was very civil, but he did not seem to have any thought about breakfasting, and so, after a short conversation standing, I went once more into the street. At Mr. West's, the wire-worker, I was not more fortunate, and my friend, Sir Richard Phillips, at whose shop I had called the day before, would not be at home for several days. I consequently had no abiding place save the street, and I "maundered about," as we say in Lancashire, devising new expedients, and conjuring up hope almost against despair. I had become quite wolfish, and the sight of good substantial meats and delicate viands in the windows of the eating-houses, all of that which in my road I stopped before and contemplated, tended to increase the pangs of hunger, which were no ways allayed by the savoury fumes arising from the cooking cellars. At last I wandered round Fleet Market, and, coming to the prison, I found a poor debtor begging at the gate.

"Please to bestow a trifle on a poor prisoner," he said.

"God help thee, lad," I replied, "I am more poor than thyself."

"How is that?" he asked.

"Why," I said, "thou has a room to retire to, and a bed to repose upon, but I have neither home, nor lodging, nor food, nor a farthing of money towards procuring them!"

"Why, then, God help *thee*!" he said, "thou art indeed worse off than myself, except as to liberty."

"And that I may not have long," I said.

He asked me what I meant, and I told him that I was come up from the country to receive judgment for attending the Manchester meeting.

"If that be the case," he said, "come back in an hour, and if I get as much as threepence or sixpence, thou shall have it."



I thanked him sincerely and gratefully, and promised I would come back if no better fortune befel me, and so pleased that I had found one friend in the course of the morning, though a poor one, I bade him good-bye, and went on towards Bridge Street.

At sight of the bridge I recollected a gentleman on the other side of the river who had behaved very kindly to me the last time I was in London, and I thought I might as well call upon him, for at all events I could not be more disappointed than I had been. I therefore passed over the bridge, and soon found the shop of my friend in the main thoroughfare, called Surrey Road, I think. Several young men were busy in the shop, and I asked one of them if Mr. Gibb was within?

"Oh, yes," he said. "Is that you, Mr. Bamford? Walk forward; he's in the sitting-room at breakfast; he'll be glad to see you; step in."

I thought that was like a lucky beginning, at any rate, and, without a second invitation, I entered the room.

A glance of one moment brought the gentleman to his feet. He took my hand and made me sit down, and rang the bell, and ordered another cup, and more butter and toast, and eggs and ham. "You have not breakfasted, I suppose?" he said.

I replied that I had not—it was just what I had been wanting to do during the last hour and a half.

"Bamford," he said, as we went on with our repast, "what's the matter with you? You don't seem as you did the last time you were in London."

"How am I changed?" I inquired.

"Why, the last time you were up," he said, "you were all life and cheerfulness when I saw you, and now you seem quite thoughtful. Are you afraid of being sent to prison?"

"No," I said, "I was not."

"What's the reason you are so serious?" he asked.

I said "I could not help being so."

"What's the cause?" he said. "Tell me the reason of this great change?"

"Well, then, to tell you God's truth," I said, "I have not a

farthing in the world, and I could not have had a breakfast if I had not come here."

"Oh! if that's all, man," he said, "make yourself easy again. Come! take some more, and make a good breakfast," and I took him at his word, I did make a good breakfast.

When we had finished he took me to his dressing-room, where were water and towels to wash. He also ordered the servant to clean my shoes, and found me a clean neck-kerchief and a pair of stockings. When I returned to the sitting-room I was quite smart, comparatively.

"Now, Bamford," he said, "this is my breakfast hour; at one we dine, at five take tea, and supper at eight; and so long as you are in London my table is yours if you will attend at meals. Take this one pound note (putting one into my hand), and if there is not a change in your circumstances for the better when that is done come for another."

I thanked him most sincerely. I never was more affected by an act of kindness in my life. He was in truth, "a friend in need, a friend indeed."

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### A CHANGE IN MY SITUATION—PROCEEDINGS IN THE COURT OF KING'S BENCH.

I now went to the warehouse in Cheapside, where my luggage had been directed to be left, and found it had arrived. I took it to a tavern, and put on a change of linen and articles of outer apparel, and then I went and engaged lodgings, to which I removed my things. I was now decent in appearance, and more comfortable in mind. I visited my friend Mr. Gibb, and did not forget the poor fellow in the prison. In the afternoon I again called upon Hunt, who received me very cordially, and I took some more of the "roasted" with him. The day following Healey and Johnson arrived in London, and on the 27th of April we all made our appearance in the Court of King's Bench, when Mr. Hunt moved for a rule to show cause why the verdict returned at York should not be set aside, and a verdict of not guilty entered on the record, or why a new trial should not be granted.

The Lord Chief Justice Abbott asked if the application was for Mr. Hunt and the other defendants.

Mr. Hunt said it was so made.

The Lord Chief Justice: Now state on what ground it is that you make this motion.

Mr. Hunt: The first ground, my lord, is a misapprehension of the learned judge who tried the case, in rejecting evidence which ought to have been received. It was evidence as to the acts of aggression, of cutting, maiming, and killing by the yeomanry cavalry, and other military, upon the persons of those who attended at the Manchester meeting. The next point is

the learned judge's admittance of evidence as to certain resolutions of a meeting held in Smithfield, and the admission of evidence as to certain trainings and drillings at a place called White Moss. The third point is the misdirection of the judge, in consequence of such rejections and admissions; and the fourth ground is, that the jury gave a verdict contrary to the evidence.

The Lord Chief Justice: Have you any other ground?

Mr. Hunt: Yes, I have a fifth and last ground, which is, that the jury gave a verdict contrary to the direction of the learned judge.

The judges not having before them the notes of the trial, the determination as to the points urged by Mr. Hunt was postponed until Monday, the 1st of May, when we were ordered again to be in attendance. We were accordingly in court at the time appointed, with our solicitor, Mr. Pearson, but the judges did not pronounce their determination, and we were directed to appear on the 8th of the same month. The court was each day crowded to excess.

On the 8th of May the judges delivered their opinion, unanimously refusing the rule applied for by us. The Attorney-General then urged that judgment should be immediately pronounced; but Mr. Hunt requested that time should be allowed us to prepare. I was as fully prepared on the first day as I was on the last, but coincided, through courtesy, in Mr. Hunt's various expedients to put off the evil day to the uttermost. The request now made by him was granted by the court, and we were ordered to come up again on Saturday, the 13th of May, for judgment.

On that day Hunt, Healey, and myself, appeared before the judges, and Johnson came shortly after. Mr. Hunt stated that certain affidavits which he had sent for from Manchester had not arrived, and he craved the indulgence of the court until he was enabled to procure them, which he expected every hour. This was accordingly granted, and we retired once more. Soon after two o'clock we again went into court, and Hunt tendered an affidavit, setting forth that the person who had been despatched to Manchester for the affidavits had not



arrived, nor had any letter been received from him. Mr. Hunt next stated that since the above affidavit was sworn a letter had been received by Mr. Pearson, wherein it was alleged that the writer had been unable to procure the affidavits by the time appointed, but there was no doubt they would arrive in the course of Sunday.

The Lord Chief Justice then ordered the case to stand over until Monday morning.

This being the day appointed for pronouncing judgment, the court and the hall were crowded at an early hour by spectators, and hardly on any former occasion did public curiosity appear to be more excited. Several persons of distinction were present in court during the greater part of the day. Among others, we observed Lord Binning, Lord Apsley, and Mr. Tierney.

About half-past eleven o'clock, the Attorney-General having prayed the judgment, we all came into court. We were accompanied by Mr. Pearson, the solicitor, Mr. Wooler, and other friends. The whole of the proceedings occupied the attention of the court from the hour above mentioned until past six o'clock in the evening.

Several affidavits were put in by Hunt, Johnson, and Healey. I did not tender any affidavit; indeed I had not been a willing party to these fruitless procrastinations.

The Chief Justice asked the Attorney-General whether he meant to put in affidavits on the part of the crown?

The Attorney-General: Not at present; it will depend, my lord, on the contents of the affidavits now put in.

The first affidavit read was that of Mr. Hunt, which entered into a history of the transactions that took place at Manchester on the 16th of August.

The joint affidavit of William Brundret, Dwarris Hart, Joseph Holland, Richard Sheridan, Samuel M'Cabe, George Burney, William Hunt, William Gregory, John Riley, Henry Barrett, William Mackelroy, and Alexander Anderson, all of them persons who had signed the requisition for calling the meeting, was next put in and read. These persons described themselves as housekeepers at Manchester and its neighbour-

hood, and weavers, &c., by trade. They described the dreadful state of depression and poverty to which they had been subjected as the motive for calling the meeting, in order thereby to obtain, by legal means, a redress of their grievances. They stated that with the utmost industry, working fourteen hours a day, they could not earn more than eight shillings per week.

The affidavit of Ann Jones, a married woman, occupying a house which commanded a view of all that took place at the meeting, was next put in. She deposed that the meeting was quiet and perfectly harmonious until the yeomanry cavalry broke in upon the unresisting crowd, who were cut down and trampled upon with merciless fury. Her house afterwards became the refuge of the wounded and dying, to whom she administered such relief as her means would afford. She likened her house to an hospital after a military slaughter.

The affidavit of Nicholas Whitworth stated that after the sanguinary transactions of the 16th of August he had made it his business to inquire into the extent of the mischief, and he had seen and spoken with near four hundred persons who had been wounded by the military. Some of these persons were injured from sabre cuts, and others by gun-shot wounds.

Part of the affidavit, which merely spoke to the deponent's information and belief as to other circumstances connected with the transactions of that day, were rejected as not admissible.

The affidavit of Robert Willis Hall stated, that the deponent had seen and spoken with three hundred persons, men, women, and children, who had been injured by gun-shot and sabre wounds, received from the military on the 16th of August.

The affidavit of Joseph Rayner stated, that the deponent had seen and conversed with three hundred and eight persons injured from the like causes.

Mr. Hunt said that before the other defendants and himself proceeded to offer any observations in mitigation of punishment, he must entreat their lordships to confine their attention solely to the fourth count of the indictment, upon which

the conviction was founded. In order to this, it was necessary that their lordships should distinguish the evidence which supported that count from that which was adduced to sustain the others, of which the defendants were acquitted, but which embraced much more heinous charges. This caution was the more necessary, not only because it would be the height of injustice that, by blending all the evidence together, they should be punished for offences of which they had been acquitted, but because one of their lordships (Mr. Justice Best) had misconceived many parts of the evidence, and had made comments upon them with that warmth which was natural to him, and which could not but have a prejudicial effect upon the minds of the other judges in meting out the punishment they were called upon to award. He therefore prayed that the learned judge who tried the case would read such parts of the evidence as applied to the fourth count only, so that the court might see upon what foundation their sentence was to proceed. He, however, would leave this matter entirely to the discretion of their lordships.

The court assured us that in awarding the punishment they should confine their attention solely to that part of the evidence which was applicable to the count on which the jury found their verdict.

Mr. Hunt then prayed, as a matter of indulgence, that the other defendants might have the priority of him in addressing the court in mitigation of punishment.

The court said they saw no reason for departing from the ordinary course of their proceedings. Mr. Hunt's name stood first on the record, and therefore he would begin.

Mr. Hunt then addressed the court in a long speech, during which he was several times stopped by the judges for irrelevant matter, and once by Justice Bayley, who, as at York, requested that he would forbear to use complimentary language. Mr. Johnson followed in a speech more condensed and to the point, whilst, when Healey's turn came, he produced a speech ready written by his friend at Lees. It was all to no use, however—the doctor could not make out the polysyllabic words without spelling, and I, who stood behind him, had to



look over his shoulder and read for him, whilst my cheeks burned, and my ears tingled with mortification, amid the suppressed titters of the gentlemen of the long robe and the spectators. When he was fast, and I was not attentive, he would look over his shoulder supplicatingly, and say in an undertone, "Prompt, Bamford! prompt," and then I set him going again. At last this was beyond endurance, and I said, "Throw that confounded paper down, man, and speak off-hand." He accordingly wrapped the paper up, and went on very fluently, arguing that the inscription, "Universal Suffrage or Death," which was on the black banner from Lees, was only meant as the expression of an opinion, and was not a demand, with death as the alternative. "Suppose," he said, "that one of your lordships had a bad leg." The gentlemen of the long robe looked aghast, wondering what would come next; for it was well known that Justice Best, who was on the bench, had two of the worst legs in England.

"Suppose," said our imperturbable friend, "that one of your lordships had a bad leg, and I, amongst other medical and surgical gentlemen, was called in. Well, we hold a consultation, and we pronounce it to be a bad case—a case of gangrene, my lords; and my opinion as to the mode of treatment is asked, my lords. I say, amputation or death! my lords, amputation or death!" And so he went on to argue that bribery and corruption having produced a political gangrene in the State, there must be amputation of the corrupting influence, or political death would ensue.

Hunt sat on a low seat behind Healey, and when this scene was passing I, half-diverted, half-ashamed, looked down at him, and saw him nearly suffocated with his efforts to refrain from laughing outright.

I spoke somewhat as follows:—

My lords,—I understand that the evidence upon which I was convicted relates to the motto, "Unity and Strength." I must, however, confess myself at a loss to understand how guilt can be implied thereon. If we examine that part of the evidence for the crown which applied more immediately to my case, we shall find that the unity and strength which I incul-



cated, and which was also expressed upon the banner from Middleton, was of a quite contrary description to that imputed to me by the verdict. Morris, in repeating, or attempting to do so, my address to the people upon the Barrowfields, says that I made use of the following expressions :—" Friends and neighbours, I have a few words to relate ; you will march off this ground quietly, not to insult any one, but rather take an insult." Heaton declares that " the people did not seem sullen and sulky. They had no angry look, but were more, as it were, in joy." Now, my lords, herein you will perceive a full comment upon this short text. Here is the " Unity and Strength " of which our banner spoke. But if we go further on to read the evidence of Dyson, who was one of my witnesses, we shall see the utility of this motto still further exemplified. Dyson says that I made use of the following words in my speech to the people, previous to their departure from Middleton : " Friends and neighbours, those of you who wish to join in the procession will endeavour to conduct yourselves orderly and peaceably, so that you may go as comfortably as possible. If any person insult you or give you offence, take no notice of them. I make no doubt but there will be persons who will make it their business to go about in order to disturb the peace of the meeting. If you meet with any such, endeavour to keep them as quiet as possible, and if they strike you, don't strike again, for it would serve as a pretext for dispersing the meeting." Before proceeding further, I solemnly and firmly assure your lordships that I never again will advise my countrymen to exercise that degree of patience which I here did, until every drop of blood shed on that day has been amply and deeply atoned for. Never again will I recommend forbearance until the perpetrators of all the horrid murders which I then witnessed, and from which I miraculously escaped, have been brought to condign punishment. My lords, I speak this not from a spirit of vindictiveness, or from a wish for indiscriminate vengeance, but from a high sense of the wrongs and injuries inflicted on my country, and from an indignant feeling that justice has been denied. Dyson proceeds—" If the peace officers come to arrest me, or any other

person, offer them no resistance, but suffer them to do their duty. When you get to the meeting, endeavour to keep yourselves as select as possible, with your banners in your centre, so that if any of you should straggle away, you will know where to find each other by your banners: and when the meeting is over, keep close to your banners, and leave the town as soon as possible, for if you should stay drinking or loitering in the streets, your enemies might take advantage of it, and if they could raise a disturbance, you would be taken to the New Bailey." Now, my lords, this is the kind of "Unity and Strength" which I recommended to the people, accompanied by a degree of patience, which, as I before said, I will never again recommend until justice be obtained. This is surely not a criminal Unity—this is surely not a Strength calculated to overawe the authorities, and to fill "his Majesty's liege subjects with terror and alarm." This is only that "Unity and Strength" which is the foundation of liberty and the security of property. How often since my arrival in London, for the purpose of waiting upon this honourable court, have I heard boastings about the liberties of Englishmen—but if such a thing does really exist, how can it be secured without a moral "Strength" on the part of the people for its maintenance; and where shall we find strength without "Unity?" This unity and strength, therefore, is nothing more or less than the foundation of all the glory and happiness which we enjoy; and shall it be said, then, that in this enlightened age an Englishman shall be persecuted and punished for inculcating those maxims upon which the glory of his country depends. If such must be the case, the era is every way worthy of the deed. Another instance of this unity and strength may be adduced in the situation of Middleton, which is a considerable manufacturing town, and situated in a populous district, and yet to secure its peace and tranquillity there are only two constables annually sworn in, and not a soldier quartered upon us; yet we have had no breaches of the peace, either on the part of the people or the authorities. It was, indeed, at one time, deemed expedient by some individuals to raise a posse of special constables. This measure,

however, I most strenuously opposed, and happy am I to inform your lordships that the good sense of the people prevailed, and the affair was dropped. Now, here again is that "Unity and Strength" exhibited, to which our motto so aptly alluded. Surely if any persons had a right to such a motto, it was the inhabitants of that place, whose conduct had beautifully illustrated it. I concluded my speech, of which the foregoing is only an extract, by assuring their lordships that I appealed not to their humanity, not to their commiseration, but to their justice. Humble as was my situation in society, I would not condescend to beg the boon of mercy from any man or set of men, however exalted their situation. I would disdain to receive that from their pity to which justice entitled me.

The Attorney-General spoke at considerable length in aggravation of punishment, and contended that the conduct pursued by the defendants in this last stage of the proceedings was an aggravation of their guilt. The only topic fairly addressed to the court in mitigation of punishment was the hardships which the defendants had suffered after they had been apprehended; but those sufferings were the natural consequences of their own crimes, which he still thought approached as near as possible to the offence of high treason. There could be no doubt of the illegality of the defendants' conduct in every part, and for the sake of the public welfare he called upon the court to pronounce such a sentence on the defendants as would, through their example, teach others to abstain from pursuing conduct equally criminal and dangerous to the peace of society, and the security of government.

The Solicitor-General declined offering anything on the same side, but left his learned friend, Mr. Scarlett, who was present at the trial, to say what occurred to him on the subject.

Mr. Scarlett rose principally to correct a mistake under which Mr. Hunt seemed to labour, namely, that he (Mr. Scarlett) was selected to conduct the prosecution. There could not be a greater misapprehension. It was purely matter of accident, from the circumstance of his situation at the bar, and the absence of his senior, that he was employed in the case. As



to any resentment he might be supposed to entertain towards Mr. Hunt, nothing could be more erroneous. He never entertained any towards that individual, of whom he knew nothing but what he happened to read of him in the public papers, and to suppose that he was selected to conduct the prosecution on account of this resentment, was really absurd. If such a selection could have taken place on such an account, he could only have treated it as a personal insult towards him on the part of the Attorney-General. Adverting to the case under consideration, he entertained no doubt of the illegality of the defendants' conduct, who, he said, endeavoured to divert the attention of the court and the public by introducing matters which had nothing whatever to do with the offence for which they were called upon to answer. He insisted, that whatever might have been the conduct of the magistracy and yeomanry of Manchester, it was wholly irrelevant to the question of the defendants' guilt or innocence of the crime imputed by the indictment.

Mr. Serjeant Cross followed on the same side.

The court having deliberated upon their judgment for nearly half an hour,

Mr. Justice Bayley proceeded to pass sentence, and in doing so he entered into a long commentary upon the case. The case had been fully submitted to the jury, and the court, having no reason to be dissatisfied with their verdict, were pronouncing such a judgment as would satisfy the justice of the case between the public and the defendants. Taking all the circumstances of the case into consideration, and giving the defendants the benefit of such mitigatory suggestions as had been urged, the sentence was—That Henry Hunt be imprisoned in his Majesty's gaol at Ilchester, in and for the county of Somerset, for the term of two years and six months, and at the end of that time to enter into security for his good behaviour for five years, himself in £1,000, and two sureties in £500 each; and that the other defendants, Healey, Johnson, and Bamford, be severally imprisoned in His Majesty's gaol of Lincoln for one year, and that they do severally enter into securities for their good behaviour for five years, themselves in £200, and two sureties in £100 each.



Mr. Hunt : I hope, my lord, the confinement is not to be solitary ?

Mr. Justice Bayley : We make no order on the subject. I make no doubt that the persons to whose custody the defendants will be committed will show them every indulgence consistent with their safety. Their duty will be performed under the inspection of the magistracy, and we take it for granted that everything will be done to avoid aggravating the inconvenience of imprisonment.

We were then taken into custody, and when we reached the hall we were greeted with the acclamations of the assembled multitude.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

HEALEY'S OUTFIT FOR LONDON—GENEROUS AID OF THE RELIEF COMMITTEE—ARTHUR THISTLEWOOD AND HIS COMPANIONS—HUNT'S ENVY AND DETRACTION—HIS BASE SLANDER—EXECUTION OF THISTLEWOOD AND HIS PARTY—TRAIT OF DISINTERESTED FRIENDSHIP—OTHER ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

It is now requisite that my narrative should return, as it were, and trace some events and occurrences parallel in time to those already recounted, from my entrance into London until the last scene in the High Court at Westminster. The narrative will then merge into one channel, and will so continue.

It is perhaps almost unnecessary to say that I made no more attempts for the present in the publishing line. My friend Sir Richard Phillips, whom I frequently called upon, advised me to drop the idea, as a volume of poetry, unless of an astonishing kind, would be quite unsaleable.

I received a letter from my wife, informing me that a number of friends came from Oldham, expecting to see me the Sunday after I set off for London; that they were quite grieved when they learned I had gone away unprovided for, they having very promptly and liberally got up a subscription, whereby they put a handsome sum into Healey's pocket to come up with.

In a day or two I saw Healey, and he told me how he had managed matters. He had heard about my poor departure, but he determined to try another plan. He got a number of small circulars printed, informing his friends that "Joseph Healey would be under the necessity of taking his departure for London on such a day, to receive judgment in the court of

King's Bench ; and as he was entirely without funds to carry him up, he would thankfully receive whatever sums the friends of reform contributed for that purpose," or words to such effect. The consequence was that a number of the Oldham and Lees Radicals took the matter in hand, and went round collecting, and the following morning he had fifteen pounds given him at Oldham, besides which he collected money at Hollinwood, Failsworth, and Newton, where he made calls, and was surrounded by friends who contributed handsomely. From his account it appeared probable that at the time he arrived at New-cross, he would have twenty pounds in his pocket.

Such was the difference betwixt his departure for London and mine. But then the means were different. Had I begged it must have been from the generosity of strangers, and not from those who were indebted to me.

Mr. Johnson was in respectable lodgings, in the Strand, I think. Healey lodged with Mr. Chapman, of Manchester, who had come up, at a cousin of the latter, in some street on the other side of Smithfield, whilst I got a cheap and cleanly but humble domicile at the "One Bell" tavern in Fleet Street.

When Healey had been a few days in London he wrote to his friends in Lancashire, giving an account of the heavy expenses he had necessarily incurred, and stating that he had only tenpence left. I had not quite expended the pound my friend Gibb had presented to me.

One morning I recollect, when the pound was done, and I was daring to entertain the question whether or not I should take my friend at his word, and ask for another, I stumbled upon Healey in the street, who pulled some money out of his pocket, and wanted to know if I had got mine. I did not understand the question, and told him so, on which he informed me that the relief fund committee had awarded to each of us defendants ten pounds ; that he had drawn his the day before and I should get mine on applying to Mr. Galloway. I accordingly lost no time in seeking the counting-house of that gentleman, Healey went with me, and I received the money. Thus, by the very kind and considerate attention of

the committee, all further anxiety as to the ways and means of existence for the present was done away with.

We now indulged ourselves with a trip by water to Richmond—that is, Healey, I, and Chapman—but there was either nothing very extraordinary in the landscape, or I was in no humour for appreciating it: I thought nothing of it. A walk through the Tower was more attractive, and I paused long beside the helmets and cuirasses and weapons from the field of Waterloo, all hacked and crushed, and still rusted in gore. At the Waterloo Museum in Pall Mall I doffed my hat before that of Napoleon, and I reverently touched the sword of Ney and the truncheon of Murat. At the British Museum I wondered and admired, but nothing interested my feelings as did the mementos of the brave and unfortunate of our own days.

The detection of Arthur Thistlewood and his companions took place, if I mistake not, during our trial at York; it caused a great sensation at the time, and the conviction of the same misguided men occurred soon after our arrival in London. It was the subject of general conversation, and particularly the intrepid bearing of the prisoners during their trial. Mrs. Thistlewood had an asylum with the family of our friend West, the wire-worker in the Strand, and I frequently saw the unfortunate woman there. She was rather low in stature; with handsome regular features, of the Grecian cast; very pale, and with hair, eyes, and eyebrows as black as night. Still she was not what may be called interesting: she had a coldness of manner which was almost repulsive. She seemed as if she had no natural sensibilities, or as if affliction had benumbed them. She wore her hair very long, and when she went to visit her husband, which she did with devoted attention, she was strictly examined, and, among other precautions, her long hair was unbound and combed out. Hunt frequently indulged in imprecations against Thistlewood and his party. He aspersed their courage, the fame of which seemed to have hurt him. But the worst thing I ever knew him do was his slandering of Mrs. Thistlewood, whom he represented as carrying on a criminal intimacy with West during her husband's incarceration. A baser, more unfounded, or more improbable



slander was never uttered. Its atrocity was its antidote. In fact, he would have said anything of any one against whom he entertained a pique. My blind adherence to Hunt could not but be much shaken by such oft-repeated instances of an ignoble mind.

On the morning of the execution of the conspirators I remained in my room, earnestly praying God to sustain them in their last hour; for though they professed not to believe in a future existence, I did, and could therefore sincerely say, "Father, forgive them! they knew not what they did." At noon, when all was over, I came downstairs. The execution was the subject of conversation in every place, and I soon heard, as perforce I must, the particulars of the disgusting transaction. When I met Healey he told me that he and Johnson had been to see it, and had paid a rather heavy price for places at a window nearly opposite the scaffold. I said he was welcome to the gratification such a scene could afford; for my part, I would not have gone on any account; and such places were the very last at which persons of our description should be seen. He put it off by saying he merely went from curiosity, to see how such things were done. The executioner, he said, bungled in severing one of the heads: he could not hit the joint of the vertebræ, and when at last the knife touched it, the head went off in an instant.

The day before we received sentence I called on my friend Gibb, and he not being at home, I enclosed in a letter of thanks a bank note for the one I had received from him. A day or two after my arrival at Lincoln Castle a letter came to hand from my kind friend, enclosing the same note, and making me welcome to it. Such traits of generosity ought not to be forgotten.

We were conducted from the court to a small and darkish room at Bellamy's coffee-house, where Hunt expressed himself in strong terms respecting the sentence on himself. We endeavoured to console him, as did also Mr. Pearson, but he continued giving fitful vent to his feelings until our conductors again invited us to take their arms. They ushered us into a couple of stand coaches, and we were driven to the King's Bench

prison, where Hunt engaged two rooms at the tavern which is within the prison. Johnson, Healey, and myself got lodgings in the wards of the building; and thus, reader, was I domiciled in the fifth place of my confinement.

If the verdict of the jury at York may be termed infamous, how shall the sentence upon me of twelve months' imprisonment be described? As infamous also, no doubt. The former circumstance can be attributed to political fanaticism only; it was contrary to the evidence and the oath which the jury had taken. The latter circumstance may, I think, be fairly imputed to that quite uncalled-for passage in my address to the court, where I said I would never again recommend so great a degree of forbearance as I had done, until the blood shed at Manchester had been atoned for. That sentence I should have acted quite wisely and patriotically enough in withholding: it was a declaration which my situation did not require, and which my fellow Radicals had no right to expect. I should have been advised against any extravagance of the sort; but as at York, I had no counsel save my own discretion, and here it failed me. But then, where was the justice of imprisoning me, not for a crime committed, but for a speech delivered? Yet so it was I am sincerely of opinion. I believe, and not without reason, that Judge Bayley did all he could to prevent that sentence being passed on me; but there were four judges on the bench, and the majority govern, and three being probably against me, he would be necessitated to deliver the sentence in which the three concurred.

The same evening, Sir Charles Wolseley entered the prison, he having been sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment in Abingdon jail, with heavy recognizances at the expiration of his confinement, for attending a reform meeting at Stockport. I met Sir Charles on the flags, and with him a gentleman whom he introduced to me as Colonel —, of the Guards. Both the colonel and Sir Charles complimented me on my address to the judges.

It was a curious place which I had got into this time. It seemed to be an epitome of the great world we had left, only there was not any spinning or weaving going on here, nor

rushing of horses, nor rattling of chariots, but all the degrees of luxury and want, of careless pleasure and thoughtful woe, were presented; all the extremes and contrarieties of our English condition might here be observed.

No sooner had we stepped inside the gate than we were accosted by several men, who offered to let us apartments entire, or lodgings, or shares of apartments, but we declined making any immediate engagements, preferring to look round and get some information from those who knew the place.

A crowd was collected near the gate, some waiting the arrival of prisoners like ourselves; some taking leave of friends, or creditors, or attorneys, or members of their families, returning into the great city; and others, whose acquaintance was perhaps now but slight with the world, would be standing there smoking, and sharing, mayhap, by sympathy, in the painful or pleasurable emotions of their fellows. A number of young and athletic men were stripped and playing at racket against the high walls of the prison, whilst numerous lookers-on sat smoking and drinking, blaming or applauding the players, and betting on the games. Some were hanging out dingy, half-washed linen to dry near their windows; the cobbler's hammer was at work; the barber had stuck out his pole and displayed his pomatum, tooth-powders, and perukes, as if people there had nothing to care about save cosmetics and curls. The broken-down, starved dandy stalked gaunt as a winter's wolf; the ruined gamester; the over-speculative stock-jobber; the player in his last act; the honourable tradesman ruined; the spendthrift with nothing to spend; the fox-hunter, hunted at last to his earth—all were here. The warrior found bars of vulgar iron too strong for his polished steel; the miser, in his living rags, hunched beside the priest in his lawn; the banker was here bankrupt; the statesman without estate. The senator in vain called "order, order," each man was thinking, acting, reading, resting, singing, praying, eating, drinking, weeping, or smiling for himself and his own concerns, just as in the wide world outside. But here all of human reason and passion, of pleasure and pain, of hope and despair, was pent up like the



rolling, tossing, boiling wave of a volcano that comes not up to the brim.

The day after our committal to this prison a son of Mr. Cobbett came to visit Johnson, but, if I recollect aright, he was not introduced to any of the other political prisoners. His father, since his return to England, had been at variance with Hunt, and he had suffered his personal feeling so far to estrange him from the common cause as to neutralise his powerful pen on the subject of the Manchester meeting, and the extraordinary proceedings at York. In fact, Cobbett was jealous of Hunt's popularity, just as Hunt was jealous of Thistlewood's fame; the same unworthy and unseemly spirit had now possession of both our great leaders, and the result was that they hated each other with a most sincere hatred. Not so the worthy Major Cartwright; he was always the same. The day after our sentence I found him in the coffee-room, promising Healey to write to some of the magistrates of Lincolnshire on our behalf, should our condition when there require it. He questioned me as to the mode in which I purposed spending my time in prison, and on my expressing a desire to learn something of the Spanish language, he promised to send me some books on the subject; and he kept his promise, but I never made any advance in the study. My wishes were greater than my endeavours.

We were visited by Dolby, the publisher, by Wooller, of the *Black Dwarf*, by Mr. Pearson, our, or rather Hunt's, attorney, and by one or two others, but, somehow or other, most of our London friends seemed to have forgotten that we were yet in the land of the living. They never came to ask for us any more than if the prison had been our tomb. Alas! how many unfortunates in that place have made the same reflection! How many, on coming forth, have found that not a friend was left to welcome them back to the world.

The day after my arrival, I announced my situation to my wife in a letter containing the following lines:—

" I never will forget thee, love!  
Tho' in a prison far I be;



I never will forget thee love !  
And thou wilt still remember me.

I never will forget thee, love !  
When wakés on me the morning light ;  
And thou shalt ever present be,  
When cometh down the cloud of night.

I never will forget thee, love,  
When summer sheds the sultry ray ;  
And thou shalt be my comforter,  
Amid the winter's cheerless day.

Oh ! they may bind, but cannot break,  
This heart, so fondly full of thee ;  
That liveth only for thy sake,  
And the high cause of liberty."

On the morning of Wednesday, the 17th of May, Mr. Hunt was sent off in custody to the jail of Ilchester, pursuant to his sentence, and on the following morning, myself, Healey, and Johnson, were called into the lodge preparatory to our removal to Lincoln. Here was a number of turnkeys and other officers, and the first movement was the unclasping of some handcuffs for the purpose of fastening us before we set out. Healey and Johnson demurred strongly, and showed a disposition to resist, seeming to consider it a great affront and degradation. I said the degradation was with those who offered the insult, and not with those who were compelled to receive it. We were then hand-chained and ushered to the door of the prison, where we expected a coach would have been in waiting; but there was not any, and we were informed we should have to walk to the booking-office. Here was another demur, my fellow prisoners expressing a strong repugnance to walking the streets of London handcuffed. The person who seemed to have the superintendence of this transaction, said we should have had a coach, but there was not any on the stands at that early hour. So we set off, and I endeavoured to soothe the spirit of repining by observing that an iron manacle, worn in a just and righteous cause, was more honourable than golden links worn by a tyrant or his minion.

But few people were in the streets, and without encountering much observation we arrived at the "Saracen's Head," on Snow Hill, where we entered a four-horse stage coach and were soon, to my great satisfaction, dashing along a broad highway, past meadows, cornfields and trees, in all the verdure of spring.

I do not recollect having ever noticed two worse-looking fellows than the twain now our conductors. One was a middle-aged man with a villainous physiognomy, and features as immovable as if chiselled in stone. I looked, and looked, and looked again, but he appeared always the same trained and inscrutable being. He seemed to have just learned how to do a turn churlishly in open day, but would be more at home in lending a hand in a lonely place at midnight. I never, to the best of my recollection, so thoroughly disliked a man for his looks and manners. His comrade was younger and somewhat more urbane and better-looking, but there was a restlessness and a lurking distrust in his every glance and action which indicated an acquaintance with, if not the habitual practice of, wily and unrelenting scoundrelism. I never, before or since, set my heart so against two strangers—God forgive me if I was wrong in my estimate of their characters—and I thought I shouldn't at all wonder if something occurred that would lead me to defy them before we got to Lincoln. These fellows sat outside the coach, we were inside; they seldom opened their lips to us nor, I believe, to any one else. I could perceive that they were armed with pistols. Our fellow traveller inside was a gentlemanly looking personage. He rode a considerable distance before any conversation ensued. When he understood who we were and what was the cause of our being chained, he became quite chatty and agreeable, but nothing occurred which claimed a place in my recollection. When we stopped for refreshment, our conductors, like two mutes, were always with us; the hand-chains were removed, and replaced before we set out again. And thus we travelled through a rather wet day and all night, and at dawn on the following morning the coach stopped at Newark, and we had to take a fresh conveyance.

We were now only sixteen miles from the place of our destination, and I proposed that we should wash ourselves and adjust our dress before we made our appearance at the jail. This favour was, after some hesitation, granted, and we were not long in finishing our toilette. The elder fellow then approached me with the clasps ready for my wrists, but I said I would not have them on any more. He looked surprised, and moved as if he would compel me; but I bade him keep back, for no force he could command should induce me to submit.

Healey and Johnson expressed a similar determination, and the two fellows asked the reason for so sudden a resolve?

I said it was not a sudden resolve on my part, for I never intended to enter Lincoln with the chains on. I cared but little how I appeared in London or the country through which we had passed, and where I was, as I should probably remain, a perfect stranger; but I knew the consequence of a first appearance in a seemingly degraded state before persons with whom we must remain twelve months. There was no necessity for the handcuffs, I said; he might put them in his pocket. I would give him the word of an honest man that I would go with him peaceably without the shackles, but I would not go at all with them.

Healey and Johnson gave a similar pledge and expressed a similar determination; and the fellows, seeing the point was not to be carried by force, gave it up; and a post-chaise being waiting at the door, we stepped into it with one of our conductors, the other riding on the seat, and in this form we passed through a fine level country and approached the ancient city of Lincoln, the cathedral and castle looming in the distance, long before we could distinctly see their outlines.

At length we were upon a pavement, and soon entered a street which we passed along, and then began to ascend the hill on which the upper town stands. Our nags dragged hardly and slowly for some time, until, having got on a level, we went forward more rapidly, and in a minute we stopped before a huge gate which, after the application of a heavy knocker, was soon opened, and we drove into a fine broad

yard and alighted at a strong nailed door, which we passed, and were conducted into the governor's apartments, where the warrant for our detention was read, and we were received formally into his custody.



## CHAPTER XXXVII.

OUR GOVERNOR—OUR APARTMENTS—INTERVIEW WITH THE  
MAGISTRATES—SKETCH OF THE PRISON—A SINGULAR  
MUSEUM.

OUR new governor came from his chamber in his morning gown to receive us. I thought there seemed to be a little aim at effect in this. His voice was clear, his utterance rapid, but distinct, and accompanied by considerable action. His complexion was brown, his features rather attenuated, his eyes quick, clear, and deep-seated, his forehead capacious, his hair rather thin and a little grey, his age forty-five or fifty, his stature about the middle size, and his motions very lively. Such was John Merryweather, the governor of his Majesty's castle of Lincoln, as the impression of his appearance on the morning of Friday, the 19th of May, remains on my recollection.

After our disagreeable conductors had retired, our governor showed us the apartments we were to occupy. We mounted two heights of stone steps, and our rooms were the first two on the right hand. Our day-room was a very good apartment, with fireplace, table, chairs, and every requisite; lofty overhead, a smooth floor of hardened mortar or composition, and a sash window, with a strong grating of iron before it. Our bedroom was the next to it, and of the same dimensions. In it were two good clean beds, a table, some chairs, and, I think, a cupboard or two, for clothes or other articles. The rooms were remarkably clean, airy, and agreeable, and we expressed more than satisfaction, thankfulness, for the indulgent feeling which had assigned us such comfortable

quarters. Mr. Merryweather gave us some general directions as to the manner in which we were required to comport ourselves towards the other prisoners, and then retired ; but was quickly followed by the turnkey, a stout, active man, named Tuxford, who after some further explanatory chat, went down and sent to us the woman who made the beds, and attended on the debtors by going errands for them into the town. With her assistance, we soon had materials for a good breakfast and dinner ; a fire was burning in the place on our arrival, and whatever cooking utensils or eating vessels we required were quickly procured. And thus, friend reader, thou seest me located in the famous castle of Lincoln, the sixth place of my confinement for alleged, or suspected, political offences.

We had scarcely set our breakfast things aside, when, after a knock at the door, the governor again entered, accompanied by about half-a-dozen gentlemen, one or two of whom seemed to be clergymen. They were, he informed us, magistrates of the county, who had business to transact in the adjoining court, and had taken the opportunity to visit us on our arrival. They asked if we were satisfied with our accommodations, and we assured them we were perfectly so, and quite grateful for their attention to our comfort.

The Rev. Dr. Caley Illingworth, chairman of the bench of magistrates, expressed a desire for himself and the others to afford us every indulgence compatible with our situation, and their duty to the executive, provided our conduct was such as justified them in pursuing that course towards us. The only restraint they wished us at present to observe was the avoidance of the company of the debtors, the holding of conversations with them on religious or political subjects, and the circulation of publications containing opinions of which they (the magistrates) could not approve. They also required that we should not receive the visits of any persons without the knowledge of the governor.

We promised obedience to their injunctions, and after many assurances of good feeling on their part, and suitable acknowledgments on ours, the gentlemen withdrew, leaving us still

more pleased than before with the situation we had fallen into.

The worthy guardians of the peace and morals of the county were evidently apprehensive lest our presumed opinions should contaminate those of the other prisoners; but when they saw, after many weeks' trial, that we acted with good faith, avoiding the debtors, and not seeking opportunities to speak on unpleasant topics, the injunction was no longer held in force; and, when in time, the governor saw us take part in the sports of the place, he expressed his satisfaction; and afterwards there was little distinction betwixt us and the debtors.

The outer turnkey was a merry, loquacious, little fellow, about seventy years of age. He proved to be very obliging, fond of money, and somewhat singular in his way. He kept a kind of curiosity shop, consisting of instruments of murder, or murderous assault, such as hedge-stakes, splintered with breaking skulls, poles broken and bloody, hatchets, bars, and bludgeons. Then he had an arrangement of the skulls of murderers, male and female, and highwaymen; and, next, halters, each ticketed with the name of the man or woman who had suffered in it. This impressive exhibition he displayed with apparent satisfaction, especially when the visitor slipped a piece of silver into his hand.

All around the prison building I have thus sketched arose high stone walls, some parts of them appearing to be of a great age. They comprised, as I was informed, an area of about eight acres, one part of which was a large green in front of the jail, on which the prisoners for debt took exercise; in the centre of this green was a shrubbery, and the green was bordered on three sides by a long slip of garden ground, embracing the foot of the wall, appropriated to the use of the governor, and cultivated by the more orderly of the felons. On the wall opposite the governor's apartments was a round tower, on which executions took place; and an ancient keep, called Lucy's tower, in the rear of the jail—part of the original fortification—was now kept locked, and was tenanted only by owls, and an immense number of shell-snails, which completely



formed its floor. In a hollow at the foot of this tower were seen the green heaps above the graves of felons who had died within the prison, and of criminals who had been executed; and on a more level plot behind the Town Hall (which building fronted the gates at the extremity of the yard) was the place of interment for debtors, some with stones and inscriptions, and others with only the green mantle of their mother earth lapping over them.

“ And these had once been lov'd full well,  
Though some might hate or fear them;  
But now they slept in narrow cell,  
Nor wife, nor child lay near them.”

High above the gates and prison walls, at a short distance outside, rose the towers of the venerable and magnificent cathedral. The Lady tower contained a peal of bells which were only rung twice a year: on Lady and Michaelmas days. They were the sweetest-toned bells I have ever heard. One of the towers was cracked, and men were employed in boring through it to brace it with iron. This was the tower of the great bell Old Tom, which boomed forth the hours to us, as they too slowly joined the eternity of the past.

As I was walking in the yard the day after my arrival, several gentlemen in clerical garb entered the gates, apparently on a visit of curiosity to the place. As they approached my line of walk, I noticed the Rev. Jabez Bunting, Wesleyan preacher, a native of Manchester, amongst them. Recognitions were given and received, and I mentioned to him the circumstance of having often sat under his ministry at Middleton, when he was but a young man and I a boy. I called to mind also the names of some of his old friends at that place, who were relatives of mine; and I thought I somewhat interested him, when stating a fact of which he seemed not to be apprised, namely, that my grandfather, Daniel Bamford, was the first who opened a door to the preachers of his sect at Middleton; and that John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, John Nelson, Samuel Taylor, and others of the old band, were frequent expounders under that humble roof.



The gentlemen soon departed, and I mention the circumstance only because it gave rise, after they were gone, to a series of very pleasant recollections of my young days, which served during half an hour to dispel gloomy thoughts, and lead me back to "that sweet morning time" when—

" With hymns we went praising  
By rindles and bowers ;  
Or, sheltered, sat gazing  
At rainbows, in showers."

One thing, however, struck me as a falling off from the good old apostolic customs of the preachers in my younger days. The reverend gentleman went away with his company without vouchsafing a blessing or a word of advice to me, not that I cared much about it, but I thought old John Gaulter, or little Jonathan Barker, would not have done so.

We had not been long here before we had reason to expect that we had either some very insidious foe, or some very indiscreet friend in the neighbourhood. One morning, Tuxford came and requested to be allowed to examine the paper we used in our letters. There seemed to be something mysterious in his manner, but we readily showed him all we had, and allowed him to take away a sheet of each sort. Soon after he returned with the governor, who explained the reason for the proceeding, when to our astonishment it appeared that Lord Sidmouth had received an anonymous threatening letter, bearing the Lincoln post-mark. The letter was sent to the governor, with a request that he would examine into the matter so far as he was able, and with the view of ascertaining whether the letter was written on the sort of paper we used.

We, of course, as in truth we must, entirely disclaimed all knowledge of the document or its writer, and strongly condemned the feeling which could lead to the writing of anonymous letters under any circumstances. The governor expressed himself as perfectly satisfied with the examination, so far as we were concerned. He then similarly examined the debtors, but no clue was obtained towards connecting any one in the castle with the infamous document, and the only result was,

that henceforth we stood better in the governor's opinion, as well as that of the visiting magistrates.

Our governor was a genius in his way; he was not an educated man, but had the reputation of being an adept in astronomy. He had a handsome mounted telescope, and frequently spent whole nights in star-gazing—a very proper employment, I thought, for the governor of a prison. One or two desperate attempts at escape had been promptly foiled by his vigilance and that of his sub-officer.

The story of Elizabeth Barton, his housekeeper—for he was a bachelor—was rather a romantic one. She was now about fifty years of age, a clean and industrious woman, and withal, was very tender-hearted to the prisoners. She was now rather infirm, but had been an uncommonly handsome woman, and in the prime of her charms she was the wife of a man of desperate habits, who initiated her into the business of passing forged banknotes. She was taken in a transaction of that sort at Lincoln, and committed for trial, at that time almost equivalent to death; whilst her husband was equally unfortunate at York. Both were convicted, and the husband was executed, but the situation of the youthful widow, now resigned to her fate, excited a commiseration so lively, that strong means were used to have her life spared, and it was so, on condition of a long confinement. This she spent in a manner which obtained for her the good opinion of her superiors and the good wishes of her fellow prisoners; and she had ever since been the manager of the governor's household.

When we went our doctor became her medical adviser. He gave her physic, and a lotion, or something of that sort, for her legs. But there must have been a mistake this time, for she soon dispensed with his attendance, complaining that his medicine made her very ill and his lotion burned the stockings off her feet.

Every morning the servant from a publichouse near attended at the gate, and served the debtors with ale. Each debtor was allowed to purchase a quart per day, but many went without, and others took it in their stead and kept it for sale at the price of a shilling a bottle, thereby gaining fourpence.

Pipes and tobacco, and indeed ale, might be had to any reasonable extent, provided the money was forthcoming. Spirituous liquors were prohibited: I did hear that such articles might be obtained secretly, but I never saw anything of the kind during my twelvemonths' stay in the place.

After I was sentenced a number of my friends at Middleton bestirred themselves, and besides making a present collection, they put down their names for a regular monthly contribution so long as I remained in prison, and thenceforward I received from them one pound per month. Without this aid I should have been sadly put to my wits as to the means of living, for I never would have asked them for a farthing or made known my situation. However, I accepted it as tendered, in goodwill, and the most friendly relations continued betwixt us. Healey complained that he had not the means for supporting himself and paying for his room and bed, and on making a representation to that effect to the governor, a room above was assigned him with a bed, free of any charge, together with the county allowance to prisoners, consisting of three loaves a week, one pound of butcher's meat, and a quantity of coals.

Soon afterwards it was understood that Mrs. Johnson was in a critical state of health, and was about to come to Lincoln to visit her husband. On that occasion I wished to give up my share of the apartments Johnson and I held, in order that he and his wife might be more comfortable during her stay. I accordingly mentioned the circumstance to Mr. Merryweather, and intimated that I should for the present be willing to take a part of Healey's room. Mr. Merryweather assented in a moment, as he always did to whatever was reasonable, and I had a bed put up for me in the room above; which room was the identical one previously occupied by my late friend Finnerty, when he was confined here on a charge of libel. It was a very pleasant room, with a fire-grate, cupboards for victuals, and places to put coals, potatoes, or other matters in. We both had iron bedsteads, and very comfortably I slept, considering circumstances, and very grateful I was for the accommodation I experienced.

I was in the habit of receiving a considerable number of



letters, newspapers, and pamphlets—perhaps four or five where Healey received one. Letters of a general nature I read to him, those of a private nature I of course did not. Letters containing money for myself I sometimes read to him, and sometimes did not, as I judged most proper; those with money for both of us were open to both, and when I divided the money I always took his receipt for it, giving him mine when he had to pay. The circumstance of so many letters coming to me I soon found excited envy and jealousy in his breast. He suspected that I did not disclose to him all the letters that contained money on our joint account. This was, perhaps, his most weak point, and it was not long ere I discovered that an influence was at work with him which at length entirely put a stop to all confidence and friendly feeling betwixt us, and rendered me during the remainder of my imprisonment a stranger to the society of my two fellow prisoners. This, to be sure, was no great loss, and as such I treated it; but my equanimity was assailed by the means taken to annoy me, and to lower me in the estimation of my friends.

I was soon, as may be supposed, in active correspondence with some of the most distinguished reformers. Hunt and Sir Charles Wolseley each wrote to me about once a fortnight, the latter also furnished me with a daily newspaper; his letters breathed, as in fact they always did, an exuberance of spirits.

Mr. Swan, Member for Grampound, who was in the King's Bench for bribery at the election, wrote to me, inquiring about the treatment we experienced on leaving the prison. The Honourable Robert Bligh, brother to the Earl of Darnley, did the same. The reader will thus perceive that, though condemned and in prison, we were not entirely disregarded by some who had influence in high places.

One day, as I was lounging in the yard, the Rev. Mr. Nelson, one of the prebendaries of the cathedral and a county magistrate, accompanied by a gentleman whom I did not know, came up to me. Mr. Nelson introduced the gentleman as Sir Montague Cholmley, a Member of Parliament for the county and a magistrate. Mr. Nelson said he wished to ask me a question in the presence of Sir Montague, and he hoped



I would answer him in all sincerity and truth. I promised him I would, if it appeared to me a proper question, and I did not suppose that he would require an answer to one that was not so. He said he certainly would not. The question was, whether or not I was satisfied with my treatment at that place? My instantaneous reply was, "Perfectly so." Was there nothing, then, in the conduct of the governor or the regulations I was subject to, of which I had to complain? My reply was, "Nothing whatever." Then I never had complained, either verbally or in writing? "Never! such a thing never entered my mind; on the contrary, I was most grateful for the indulgence I received." "Did I suppose," asked Mr. Nelson, "that I was as well treated there as I should have been if confined at Lancaster?" "Yes," I said, "and a great deal better, I was of opinion. In my own county I should probably have been put in the worst dungeon the magistrates could have found."

Was I aware of any grounds of complaint on the part of either of my fellow prisoners, I was next asked. I was not aware of any such cause, I answered. Sir Montague then informed me that a letter had been sent from Lincoln to a gentleman in London, whose name I have forgotten, containing allegations of great cruelty on the part of the governor towards us, and of most uncalled-for treatment generally, and he was come down purposely, he said, to ascertain the truth or falsehood of the charge. I said that, so far as I and my two fellow prisoners were concerned, the charge was most false, and I was certain they would bear me out in my statement. But, I added, "your worships can see them, and let them speak for themselves." They assented, and I led up to the room occupied by Healey and myself, and, opening the door, walked in, inviting the gentlemen to follow. I could not see the doctor at first, and thought he must have gone out, but a kind of splashing noise directed my looks to the door, and there he was behind it, as it stood open. "Here is Doctor Healey, gentlemen," I said, as they advanced into the room. I never saw a look of greater mortification and embarrassment than the doctor exhibited at that moment, as the gentlemen

bowed to him and smiled at each other. The doctor was busy washing his shirt, and was actually up to his elbows in suds, which he vainly tried to conceal, first by holding his hands behind him, and when he saw that posture did not avail, by wiping the suds off, and rolling down his sleeves. After a moment or two spent in civil inquiries as to his health, and so forth, the same questions were put to him which had been to me, and nearly the same replies were elicited, whereupon the gentlemen expressed themselves quite satisfied, and left the castle.

We had a regular scene after they were gone. I dearly liked a harmless joke, and had many opportunities for seeing my comrade exhibit himself in his various moods. "Well," said I, "I never knew such a thing in my life." "Such a thing as what," asked the doctor, who, rather sulkily, was preparing to go back to his suds. "Why, such a thing as that a learned doctor should be caught up to his elbows in suds and washing his shirt," and I laughed until my sides almost cracked. The doctor looked fiercely, and giving me a hearty malediction, said I had no right to bring them up; I brought them purposely, and he knew it; I had done it to lower his respectability. I laughed louder than ever, pretending great sorrow that so celebrated a character should have been caught in the suds—laying emphasis on the latter words. The sense of humiliation I suppose now recurred with double force, and in his passion he caught up the mug and offered to throw the suds upon me, but I stepped out of the door that moment, and the doctor's foot slipping, in the wet, he came down on the floor, and, smashing the earthen vessel, all the suds were soon floating around the room. I then thought it time to retreat, and stepping downstairs I escaped into the yard, doubled up with laughter. The doctor ever afterwards took care not to be surprised washing his shirt.

I may here mention a trait in the natural instinct of the feathered tribe. The governor had a splendid peacock, with a hen, and a young one which had the run of the grounds. One fine clear day, the cock and hen were beside the shrubbery, and as it happened I and some other persons were at the time

near the place. The hen suddenly turned her head, side upwards, and uttered a kind of cry, in which the cock joined, and the chick was instantly close to her wing. I looked up, but could not see anything, and the two birds keeping their heads aside, turning them as if following a moving object with their eyes, I was convinced there must be a bird of prey within the ken of their vision. I again looked in the direction they seemed to be doing, and at length descried a small black spot at an immense height over head. It seemed to move in a circle; and in some time I could perceive that it was gradually descending. It came lower and lower, the fowls still keeping a steady eye on it, and the young one being under wing, and at last it came so near that we made it out to be a fine glede hawk. He took a few circles around the castle, as if he intended to make a stoop, but, probably seeing too many of the wrong sort, he at length gave a wheel, and swept out of sight.

The worthy Major Cartwright, faithful to his promise, did not forget to use his influence with some gentlemen of the county in our favour. Happily, we had no need of that, though he was not to be thanked the less, for the magistrates evinced every disposition to be kind towards us, and the governor and his subordinates, though naturally a little fond of power, never gave us reason to suppose that they wished to increase the small portion of restraint we necessarily experienced. The governor, I must say, like the magistrates who directed him, never hesitated about doing us a good turn. I had hitherto paid him a sum per month for the use of a bed and bedding which he found me, but immediately on my application to be allowed to find my own bed, which a worthy old lady offered to provide for me, the application was granted, and the county allowance was also given me on a subsequent application.

My best and firmest friend was the above venerable lady, the wife of a blind and aged minister of the church, who was living at Lincoln on a small allowance. This good old woman was like a mother to me, reproving me when blamable, advising me in difficulty—for she was a sensible strong-minded woman—consoling me amid vexation and ingratitude,



and defending and encouraging me in the right. I sometimes thought that if spirits of the departed were really permitted to return to the earth, it was not improbable that the spirit of my departed mother might be the animating principle of the good being whose benign influence watched over me. I shall ever love a good woman for the sake of Mrs. Stainton; she was to me what my own mother would have been had she lived.

It was scarcely to be expected that two men so entirely dissimilar in person and mind as Healey and myself should long remain together, perforce, without having cavillings, differences, and ultimately dislikes. It is all very well to have a ramble through a countryside with a man, or to be in company once or twice a week, but to have to endure the company daily of one we cannot thoroughly esteem, is rather too much for human patience; at all events, it was often too much for mine. Nothing sooner tried me than an exhibition of duplicity and false pretension, and of these, God knows, I had enough. I was surfeited to disgust. But I forbear.

The room which Healey and I occupied opened into a lobby where there was a back window looking down into the condemned ward, and over a great extent of country even to Belvoir Castle, the flagstaff of which we could see with a glass on a clear day. This lobby, in consequence of the view, was also visited by strangers, particularly on Sundays, and it was my wish and endeavour to keep it in a state of neatness and order. This very proper desire was, however, often thwarted by Healey, who would put his offal and the scrapings of his dishes on the window-sill, and his potatoes with their peelings on the floor, near the door, and in sight of every one who came up. One Sunday, on his doing this, I remonstrated with him in terms which led to warm words on both sides, in which I upbraided him with his mean jealousy on account of the letters received, and of being perfidious under the guise of friendship, and I concluded by likening him to the viper which stung the bosom of its benefactor. This enraged him beyond endurance, and he came at me with a two-handed blow with the poker. I caught the weapon in my hand, and in



trying to wrest it from him, he having a very tenacious grasp, I lifted him off his feet, and laid him, with but little violence, on the floor, and tore the thing out of his hands by main force. I then held the heel of my shoe over him, and said if he was not so utterly contemptible, I would stamp the breath out of his body. I then flung the poker under the grate and went out of the room, and on returning I found him on his feet, pretending to spit blood from his lungs, which he said I had injured by crushing him. The fact was that his lip was a little swollen and cracked, having probably come in contact with his own knuckle, or mine, during the scuffle, and that was whence the pretended blood from the lungs came. I will not repeat the terms of reproach which I flung away upon him. He went downstairs and brought up the turnkey, and accused me of having knocked him down, beaten him with the poker, dragged him on the floor, and stamped on his breast, and concluded by spitting out streaks of blood as before. I then gave a true version of the affair, showing the turnkey the state in which the lobby and window were, and requested him to examine Healey's lip and see if that was not bleeding inside. He did so, and found it bruised, and blood oozing from it. He then told the doctor he did not believe a word he said ; that he had found him in falsehoods before, and that if he were not more circumspect in his conduct he would report his behaviour to the governor, and have him removed to the other side of the prison. Healey thus took nothing by his motion, whilst I took only the resolution to get out of his company as soon as possible.

But it was not at Lincoln alone that I was doomed to be annoyed. The grossest slanders were propagated at Middleton and other parts of Lancashire, and in some cases they were but too coldly combated by those who called themselves my friends, but who alas ! knew little of the "generous friendship," which

"No cold medium knows ;  
Burns with one love, with one resentment glows."

One hoary-headed slanderer, who hated me because I had

prevented him from imposing on the relief fund and obtaining money to which he had no right, circulated a report that I was actually a Government spy, that I had sold the Middleton blue banner to the authorities at Manchester for twelve pounds, and that if the banner were sought for, it would be traced to the police-office at the said town. The fellow actually went about the town swearing most confidently that such was the case. A committee was appointed to investigate the charge, and a deputation waited upon my wife, who opened a chest, and pulling out the banner, displayed it; and yet the scoundrel afterwards went up and down persisting in what he had said.

It may be readily supposed that the fine yard the prisoners had access to would induce them to take much out-of-door exercise. This was the case, and I in particular of our party, frequently joined in the running, leaping, and football matches which took place. I generally entered with ardour into the game, and being a good footman, was not considered a mean auxiliary to any party. Often, however, when the game was over, and I was quite warm with the exercise, would I fling myself down on the grass, and perhaps take a nap until some fresh sport called me again into action. By such unthinking conduct I took many colds, and neglecting to diet myself, or take medicine, the colds struck to my weak part, the lungs, and in time I began to have my old tightness at the breast and my night cough, as at Lancaster, only much worse, attended by profuse perspirations and other weakening symptoms.

It was about the beginning of August that my dear wife, hearing of the state of my health, expressed her wish, in a letter, to come over and see me, and I gladly assented, provided the necessary means could be obtained. I had, at Hunt's request, written a piece called "the Song of the Slaughter," which first appeared, I think, in his memoirs, and was afterwards published at the *Observer* Office, Manchester; and with three pounds, accruing from the sale of it, and one pound which my wife borrowed, she was speedily in a condition to join me, and announced her intention of doing so.

About this time the Rev. Mr. Nelson, and other magis-

trates, came to the castle on business, and before they went I took an opportunity of stating to them my wife's intention of coming over, and requesting the use of a room to ourselves during her stay. They asked if there was one anywhere unoccupied, and I said that fortunately there was one, the very next to that I was now in. They directly went into the turnkey's lodge, taking me with them, and sending for Tuxford, they ordered him to get the room I had mentioned coloured and cleaned, and to put up a bedstead, and give me the key of the place, that being my apartment during my wife's visit. Then, turning to me, Mr. Nelson said, "We [meaning himself and the other magistrates] do not approve of all that the Manchester magistrates have done, any more than of some of your proceedings, but we consider you to be here as prisoners under peculiar circumstances, and we should be sorry to be the means of depriving you of any little indulgence compatible with your safe custody, especially, so long as you comport yourselves as you have hitherto done. There is one thing, however," Mr. Nelson added, after a pause, "which we must enjoin upon you, and that is, that you do not make any public statement as to this matter; that you do not mention it to the newspapers, or make a noise about it. It is an indulgence, and at variance with the rules we ourselves laid down for the governance of the prison, but, as I said, under the peculiar circumstances of yourself and your fellow prisoners, we will do all we can to make you comfortable so long as, by your conduct, you enable us to be kind towards you."

I expressed my unfeigned gratitude to the worthy magistrates, and promised to obey their injunction. The place was immediately whitewashed and cleaned, and the day following, to my very great comfort, I removed to that welcome domicile, with thankfulness of heart to those who had been so kind, and with extreme satisfaction at being thus left alone, and to my own thoughts.

It was on the 18th of September that my wife was to arrive. Our meeting was both mournful and tender. The sight of my features, so much altered for the worse, and of my

pale and wasted hands, renewed her tears, and it was not till after a fit of downright crying on her part, during which I let her feelings have uninterrupted vent, that she became more calm, and we unburdened our minds of whatever lay heaviest and most painful there. And of such matters, what with the falsehood or apathy of friends, and the open or insidious detraction of enemies, God knows, we had enough.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### THE PATRIOTS OF OLDHAM—A COMFORTER IN PRISON—A MELANCHOLY SPECTACLE.

AMONGST the best and truest supporters of persecuted Radicals, and the Radical cause, were a small but firm band of patriots at Oldham. Their like never, to my recollection, existed previously in Lancashire, nor has it ever since. To them I owe an especial acknowledgment, and if a grateful remembrance of the men and their good deeds, and a public recognition of their good words, through a medium so humble as this, be any equivalent for their kindness, they have it. Some of the best have long since been called to the reward of "the good and faithful servant." Some still remain, but scattered and bowed by the storms of life. A few winter's gales, and we shall all be gone to, I hope, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

It may easily be conceived that the society of my wife was a great solacement. I had now always one true friend to converse with, and though the replenishment of my "basket and my store" was somewhat more frequently required, we did not regret on that account; since, if there were plenty we partook it, and if not, with Milton, we could sit down to our "herbs and other country messes," and be thankful for them. Our greatest cause of anxiety now was the absence of our child; but as she had been left with her uncle and aunt, in whom we had unlimited confidence, we were the more easily reconciled to her having stayed at home. My wife certainly saved something by going to market herself. She could go out and return without a single question at the gate, without

any rude hand examining her basket ; and then, when at night I was locked up, it was in company with the one most fitted to administer to my wounded mind ; one who with me could retrace the hours and days from childhood, and leading me to bright recollections, could wile me from present ill to past happiness, until the present also at times became tinged with brightness.

In the beginning of October my wife returned into Lancashire. Our parting was fraught with saddening anticipations. I still kept up appearances as well as I could, and partook of active exercise, but my health was no better, and the means I took to restore it were just the opposite of what my case required.

In January, 1821,\* my wife returned to Lincoln, in accordance with my earnest wish.

I was witness about this time to a very affecting incident which took place at the prison. A young, good-looking countryman had narrowly escaped being hung for an atrocious case of housebreaking. He was sentenced to transportation for life, and had sent for his mother to come and take leave of him before he went off. She was a little neat-looking woman, pale, and rather browned, and attired in a plain but very cleanly habit. She stood before the barred gate leading to the dungeons, and when she heard the clank of chains coming along the dim passage, she startled, clasped her hand convulsively, and listened. Her son soon made his appearance, dragging his chain. He extended his arms towards her, and she rushed into the gloomy passage, and to his bosom—uttered his name—and fainted. They rubbed her temples, and tried to give her water, but in vain. Her teeth were fast set, her colour deathly pale, and she continued thus long—he standing weeping over her and uttering words of endearment. “ Mother ! Mother !—Dear Mother !—Oh ! that I should have brought you to this ! ” Many eyes unwont to melt were also in tears, but no one, save the son, spoke. At length they motioned him to return, but he broke away, and kneeling, caught his mother in his arms, and pouring tears fast on her

\* She stayed with him till his release, in May.

face, he reverently kissed her wan forehead and her cheeks, and resigning her to the attendants, he said, "Now let me go!—I've killed my poor mother!—I've broken her heart!" and they led him away. Then they carried her out for air, and when, after some time, her senses returned, she cast a look around and peered down the passage. "He is gone," said one of the by-standers, on which she sighed, and departed slowly out at the castle gate, weeping.

I was indebted this spring to Mr. Berry, one of my late sureties, residing at Failsworth, and some other friends, for a suit of new clothes, which I had begun to be in need of. They sent me a sum of money, with a request that I would fit myself out decently to come home, and I obeyed their directions, by which I lost some friends.

Mrs. Johnson, the wife of my fellow prisoner, never recovered from her indisposition. She kept declining in health, and returned home to die. I mention this painful circumstance because I am desirous to render that testimony to the conduct of the magistrates and governor, which it so truly merited.

I believe it was the wish of Mrs. Johnson that her husband should, if possible, come to see her before she died; and an application was made to Lord Sidmouth by him for that purpose, but without effect. The visiting magistrates, and the Rev. Mr. Nelson in particular, then took up the affair, and memorialised his lordship, but with no better result than before. The magistrates of the county next got up an urgent but respectful memorial, which was presented to his lordship by the county members, but without effect; Lord Sidmouth assigning as a reason for his refusal, that if he conceded the point in this case he did not know on what grounds he could refuse it in others which might occur, and that the practice would lead to endless confusion and evasions of the law. Mr. Johnson did not therefore see his wife, though it was not the fault of the magistrates that he did not; and when they could not do anything more, they gave him the entire range of the grounds within the walls—every indulgence, in fact, excepting walking out of the castle gates. Most of his time, when out



of doors, was thereafter spent in the gardens, apart from the other prisoners. I was frequently asked why I did not claim the same privilege, and I replied by reminding the interrogators that my case was different. I had the society of one whose companionship was a greater blessing than the range of any length or breadth of land could bestow. His privilege was not necessary to my happiness. I was content with what I had, and, moreover, whilst a claim of that sort would not benefit me, it might injure him, by causing his confinement to our common bounds. I therefore never interfered; and I should have acted a very selfish part if I had.

The expiration of my imprisonment was now fast approaching, and I and my wife often amused ourselves by conjectures as to how we should get home. It was soon decided, however, that we must walk it, and she, laughing, boasted what a light step she would lead me when we were on the road. Some perplexities as to the means for travelling, whether on foot or otherwise, were happily dissipated by the same beneficent friends who had smoothed our path at London. Healey, entirely unknown to me, had written to Mr. Galloway on the subject with respect to himself, and the result, to my great surprise, was a letter from that gentleman, directed to me at Lincoln, which set all our apprehensions at rest on that score.

Two of my friends in Lancashire—namely, the aforementioned Mr. Berry, of Failsworth, and Mr. Mark Smith, of Heywood—became my sureties for five years, in one hundred pounds each, and it now only remained for me to give my recognizances in two hundred pounds, previous to my liberation.

It was a very fine morning, I recollect; there was a large meeting of magistrates in the county hall, and many of the debtors were in court, for it was held for their relief also.

My wife took my arm and we entered the court and were shown to a seat opposite the chairman, Dr. Caley Illingworth. The Rev. Mr. Nelson was also there, and several other magistrates whom I knew from their frequent visits to the castle.

“Joseph Johnson,” was soon afterwards called, but he did



not answer. "Joseph Healey," was next called, but neither did he appear. I was then called, and, standing up, was invited to go across the table near the chairman. I did so, and entered into my own recognizances in the usual terms, after which I returned and sat by my wife. Healey and Johnson shortly afterwards came into the court, and when some business had been disposed of, they were each directed to pass over the table as I had done, and then they severally went through the same form and took seats below the chairman.

Dr. Illingworth then called our names, and we stood up whilst he congratulated us on the near termination of our imprisonment, thanked us for our good behaviour, which had enabled the magistrates and the governor to afford us some indulgencies which we otherwise could not have had, and hoped that in future the reflections which must have presented themselves in prison would, during the remainder of our lives, produce a line of conduct which would render unnecessary any further visitations of the law—or words to that effect.

I looked at my two fellow prisoners, expecting that something would be said by them, and especially by Johnson, who had experienced so largely the best endeavours of the magistrates on his behalf; but neither of them spoke, they both sat down.

I, remaining on my feet, then thanked the magistrates and the governor for their kind behaviour towards me and towards my wife during my imprisonment. I could not, I said, suffer that opportunity to escape without expressing to them how unfeignedly grateful we were for all they had done on our behalf. Their kindness was such as I did not expect when I came to that place, and was certainly such as I should not have experienced in my own county. It had made a deep impression on both our hearts, and for myself I must say that if any course could wean a man from error by creating a grateful feeling in his mind, it was a course such as I had experienced at that prison. It would have an effect more powerful with me than the harshest measures that could have

been adopted. I again thanked them most sincerely and gratefully. I should remember their kindness, I said, to the last day of my existence.

I then sat down, thinking that now, at any rate, my two fellow prisoners could not avoid following so proper an example. They, however, kept their seats, and spoke not one word. Then, in a few minutes, Johnson got up and walked over the table, out of the court, and the moment after Healey followed him.

I need not intimate what impression this scene created on the minds of all present, nor repeat the observations it gave rise to. I will only say that I the next day left the castle with the good opinion and good wishes of all who had known me, whether rich landowners, or reverend magistrates, or poor prisoners. The governor spoke well of me and ordered that I should be admitted to the castle on any day, so long as I stopped in Lincoln. But my most welcome applause was my own conscience, which told me that, whilst I had in a becoming manner submitted to the authorities of the country, I had also deserved their esteem, had disarmed, perhaps, some animosities, had done some good to the cause of reform, and had, by my conduct, made one more appeal for those of the class in life to which I belonged.

When I came to settle with the "Old Daddy"—the turnkey at the gate—which prisoners generally did by making him a present before leaving, he begged I would give him my wooden shoes, for so he called my Lancashire clogs, which I wore in the winter. I gave them to him, and he expressed great delight, saying he would place them in his collection of curiosities, for it seemed that clogs had been but very rarely, if ever, seen previously in Lincoln.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

OBJECTS AT LINCOLN—TOM OTTER—BARTON FERRY—GREAT MARKHAM—A SCRUPULOUS LANDLADY.

WE stopped a day or two in Lincoln, at our friend Stainton's, and having sent our luggage to the carriers, we examined many of the venerable ruins of the place, particularly the fine Roman arch called "The Stone Bow," one of the most perfect specimens of Roman architecture in England. The splendid and venerable cathedral also attracted our particular notice, and we could not but lament the ruthless and insensate havoc made amongst the images and statues by the soldiers of the stern Cromwell.

It was on the afternoon of Wednesday, a fine day, that we bade adieu to Lincoln, and passing over the race-ground, we stopped at the "Eel-pie House," where we partook of their celebrated dish, "collared eel," and had our parting glass with some friends who accompanied us. Proceeding thence, we passed Saxmundham on our right, and at Dringey Nook we came in sight of the gibbet of Tom Otter, who, in the dark shady lane in which he then hung, murdered his sweetheart by beating out her brains with a hedge stake. We stopped at a very decent inn, at a short distance from the gibbet, and from thence continued our journey through a level country, full of woods and plantations, till the broad waters of the Trent suddenly appeared before us. A shout and a signal brought the ferryman over, and after some persuasion, with fear and trembling, my wife at length went on board and we were ferried over and landed in the county of Nottingham. A short and very agreeable walk through a rural country, with

pretty English cottages embowered in gardens and fruit-trees, brought us to the village of Great Markham, where we entered a snug little publichouse and took up our quarters.

We sat chatting over our tea until it was nearly bedtime, and when I requested that we should be shown to our room, the landlady gave an inquiring and dubious glance at us, and retired, evidently to take a second thought upon the subject. The servant woman next came into the room, pretending to fetch something, but once or twice I observed her taking side looks at us; and as I perceived there were misgivings of some sort, I ordered a glass of liquor and a pipe, resolved to amuse myself by watching the shifts and manœuvres of these simple country folks.

The mistress brought the glass, and the girl brought the pipe, and each gave a scrutinising glance, which we seemed not to notice. We were both ready to burst into laughter, only my wife was a little apprehensive lest we should be turned out of doors. I thee'd and thou'd her in their presence, as a man might do his wife, and talked to her in my ordinary careless way; and at last the landlady came and, begging we would not be offended, asked if the young woman was my wife? I now laughed outright, and my wife could not refrain, though she covered her face. I assured the good woman that my companion had been my wife many years. Nay, she had no ill opinion of her, she said, only she looked so young. But, young as she appears, she reckons to be my age within about three weeks, I said; and she was mother to a fine girl, now in the ninth year of her age. Oh! she was sorry to have mistaken us, she said, we should have a comfortable bed ready in a few minutes. And so saying, she left the room, satisfied, no doubt, with the explanation which had set at rest her troublesome qualms of conscience. We had most excellent lodgings; and in the morning we rose early and commenced our journey, by lanes and shady footpaths, sweet with the breath of flowers and echoing the music of birds.

Elksley. What associations in a name! The ley—the pasture land—the lair of the elk. Where was now the elk? Where the wide wold, with its “gre wolf” and the elk stalk-



ing, the dimly-seen monarch of a misty land? All had disappeared—the elk, the wolf, were no more—and the dun moor and black moss had become laden with pastures and fields of grain, and garlanded with orchard blossoms and dotted with cottages as white as lilies on a garden bed.

Here we breakfasted with the landlady, a tidy little body, and a delicate-looking young girl, who had come from Nottingham to stop here for her health. We found this a most agreeable resting-place; everything was fastidiously clean; the tea, the sugar, the bread, were of the best quality, whilst the butter—if I may be allowed a new compound—was most butter-fully rich. We, of course, much enjoyed our breakfast, for—

“We together far had come,  
Among the dews that morning.”\*

And I believe our hearty eating made the poor lass from Nottingham quite hungry. She said she had not taken such a breakfast for a long time.

From hence we travelled a long way, nine miles, I think, chiefly through woods and plantations belonging to the Duke of Newcastle. We seldom saw a house, and the solitude was unbroken for long distances, except by the whirring of the pheasant or partridge across the road, or the bounding of the hare. At Shireoaks we passed a large mansion and some substantial homesteads, and entering Worksop, with its ruined abbey on the right, we again rested and partook some excellent ale. At South Aston we entered Yorkshire, and near Aston crossed the Rother river; and successively passing Handsworth, Darnal, and Attercliffe (Qy. why not Ottercliffe, or Addercliffe?), we entered Sheffield when near nightfall, and having been directed to The Axe publichouse, or “Hammer and Axe,” I forget which, we soon found the place, on our left as we entered the town, and there took our quarters for the night.

We intended to stop a day here, to look about us, and survey the curiosities of this great city of Vulcan, and well should

\* Spencer T. Hall, the poet of Sherwood (*Bamford*).

we have been repaid for the delay, no doubt, but as important events not only frequently arise from small causes, but are baffled by them, our dreams of all the shining jewels of this wondrous cave, shrouded in smoke and sulphur, and glaring red fire, were quickly annihilated by a very significant object. As I sat up in bed, I was almost startled by a sudden exclamation of my wife, who discovered one of those noisome flat insects so common in the beds of towns and crowded places, crawling up my shirt. This determined her. "She would not stop in that place," she said, "for the world—she could not eat in it—and we must set off directly;" and suiting the action to the word, she was dressed in quick time, and fidgiting to be gone—to get out "into the green lanes," and to "breathe the sweet country air." I rather thought, however, that the wish to see her child affected her; perhaps she had been dreaming of her; at all events, I am sure the anticipated pleasure of embracing my dear little girl once more had considerable influence in my acquiescence to quit the town thus suddenly.

Well, we soon paid the shot, and were on our way out of the town. We got, however, on the wrong route, and, before we were aware of that, we found ourselves climbing the foot of the great hills which divide Yorkshire from Derbyshire. For several miles we continued to ascend, and everywhere we came to a small flat, and hoped we had surmounted all, when a few paces discovered to us another eminence. I wondered how my little woman stood it, but she this morning showed me her light foot indeed, and with all cheerfulness we breasted the hill, anon looking back, to see how far we had travelled towards home. At length we entered on a broad wild moor, where for miles and miles towards Yorkshire all was a scene of dun heath and shelterless plain; whilst downwards, over Derbyshire and Cheshire, the eye commanded what seemed an almost illimitable expanse of mountain land.

"But where the vision began to fail  
There seemed to be hills of a cloudy pale."

In the valley we had left—now as we could discover of a

beautifully undulating surface, and gaily green in the sun—lay the town of Sheffield, shrouded in its furnace clouds. On our right and left were the wild and boundless districts I have mentioned, and before us was the wrinkled front of Mam Tor, frowning like an eld, in witch-land.

We walked to the height of Hathersage Grange, and there stopped to survey the vast, solitary, yet pleasing scenes. My wife was seated on a grassy knoll, whilst I stood beside her with my stick and bundle over my shoulder, my back towards the sun, whose beams were somewhat mitigated by light clouds, and my looks directed over the wold towards the Yorkshire border.

"Well, I am convinced now," I said, breaking a long silence, "that Burke was not so far wide of the truth after all."

"What did Burke say?" she asked; "for my part, I never heard him say much of either truth or falsehood."

She thought I was alluding to one of the simplest of my Radical comrades, whom we had nicknamed "Burke."

"Pho! its Edmund Burke, the great orator and political apostate, that I mean."

"And what did he say?" she asked.

"Say? He called the people 'the swinish multitude'; and I am convinced he was right, for I have discovered I am one of them."

"What do you mean?" she again asked, now more interested.

"I can see the wind," I said, "and that's a sure sign I'm one of the swinish herd."

"See the wind! And what's it like?" asked she, looking up and laughing.

"It's the most beautiful thing I ever saw," I said, "and it thou'll come here, thou shall see it also."

I will suppose that the curiosity natural to the sex was excited, for she instantly was at my side.

"Now look over the top of the brown heath with a steady eye, and see if thou canst discern a remarkably bright substance, brighter than glass or pearly water, deeply clear and



lucid, swimming, not like a stream, but like a quick spirit, up and down, and forward, as if hurrying to be gone."

"Nonsense!" she said, "there is not anything."

"Look again, steady, for a moment," I said; "I still behold it."

"There is," she said, "there is; I see it! Oh! what a beautiful thing!"

I gave her a kiss, and said I loved her better than ever. She was the first woman who, I believed, had ever seen the vital element, the life-fraught wind.

"Is that the wind?" she asked.

"That is the wind of heaven," I said, "now sweeping over the earth, and visible. It is the great element of vitality, water quickened by fire, the spirit of life!"

I know not whether I was quite right in my philosophy, but we bowed our hearts, and adored the Creator; and in that we were both right, I hope.

We stood gazing in wonder and admiration; for still, like a spirit-stream, it kept hurrying past—or as a messenger in haste; and so we left it glittering and sweeping away. This was on the morning of the 19th day of May, 1821.

And, reader, I dare be bound with thee that, if having a good pair of eyes, thou wilt at the same season of the year, and on a day like ours—with a mild sun and a quick breeze out of Yorkshire—if thou, at such season, and on such day, climb to the top of Hathersage Grange and stand with thy back to the sun—Mam Tor visible on thy left hand—then also shalt thou see the beautiful apparition—the spirit of life—which we saw. It will repay thy trouble well, I assure thee. Neither I nor mine can ever forget it whilst memory is ours.

At Hathersage we heard the sound of a shuttle, and my wife remarked that we were getting near home. Fortunately we stepped into a little publichouse, never exceeded in neatness and comfort, except by the one at Elksley. Our breakfast was all that could be desired, and we did justice to it, having walked our ten or eleven miles, and over such a country.

At this place, in the churchyard, are shown two small



stones, marking, as people say, the grave of Little John, the faithful companion of the bold Robin Hood. A picturesque low cottage, situated in a garden, and overgrown with ivy and other creepers, is still shown as the one in which the broken-down outlaw took refuge after the dispersion of his band ; and where he also died. Both objects are worthy the attention of the travelling antiquary. Such a place would be a likely shelter to a proscribed man ; whilst the moors and the forest glades, then but little known, and seldom penetrated, would yield plenty of game to a good bow, and no one be the wiser of the trespass.

At Hope, where we called at the house of the village blacksmith, to ask for a draught of water, it being a warm day, we were, with old English hospitality, presented with a jug of good brown ale, and also pressed to sit down and partake the family dinner of hot potato pie ; but, with all gratitude, we declined the latter and went forward, not stopping at Castleton, for we had now fairly set our hearts on getting home.

In climbing up the Winnits (Wind Yates) we sat down to rest, and to view the rocky scenery around and above us. A spring of clear water was trickling near, and with that health-giving beverage we quenched our thirst. A fine hawk was circling over head, and a couple of ravens disturbed the death-like silence with their croak. The place was mysterious, and had an air of savage grandeur. The imagination might easily expand in such a vast and darksome gorge. Were it indeed the portal—the palace gates of the wind ? of the wild, and beautiful, and powerful existence which we had seen that morning ? And if so, whither did it lead ? We mounted to the top, and found ourselves again entering on a wide dun moor. Mam Tor, with her bold, storm-channelled front, on our right ; the sun in his mid-height above us, and a long and weary waste, with swampy bottoms, and grey grass waving in the wind, before us.

Not wearily, but cheerfully and lightsofely, along this desert track we went, and having gone a far way, we began to descend, and eventually rested again at a publichouse in the pleasant little town of Chapel-le-Frith.

Here I was certainly taken to be a fellow who was running away with some old woman's daughter. The landlady could not, at first, believe that my wife was my wife; and when I told her, as I did the good woman at Great Markham, that she had been a mother nine years, she called John, her husband, to partake in her amazement, and "wonderfully strange," to our great amusement, they both deemed the case to be.

We stopped not at Whaley Bridge, for the sun was getting low, but hastened to Disley, and after a brief rest there we again started, though neither I nor my fellow traveller were so alert as in the morning. In fact our feet began to be worse for our two days' travel, and when we got upon the paved causeway, betwixt Bullock Smithy and Stockport, it was like treading on red-hot stones. Thus, long after nightfall, we went limping arm-in-arm into Stockport. We found the dwelling of our friend Moorhouse at the lower end of the town, and knocking at the door, were received with every hospitality.

My friend and his wife bustled about, and did all they could to make us comfortable. We got a supper of good refreshing tea, and then essayed to go to rest, but my poor little companion had to mount the stairs on her knees—she would not be carried up—and when her stockings were removed, her feet were found covered with blood-red blisters. I got some hot water and soap—washed her feet well—wiped them carefully, till quite dry—wrapped them in her flannel petticoat, and put her to bed. I then washed my own feet, for they were not much better than hers, and committing ourselves to Divine care, we were soon oblivious of all weariness and anxiety, and on awaking the next morning, our feet were as sound, for anything we felt, as they were when we set out from Lincoln.

Our walk to Manchester the next morning was a mere pleasure trip. We scarcely stopped there, but, hastening onwards, we entered Middleton in the afternoon, and were met in the street by our dear child, who came running, wild with delight, to our arms. We soon made ourselves comfortable in

our own humble dwelling ; the fire was lighted, the hearth was clean swept, friends came to welcome us, and we were once more at home.

“Be it ever so humble  
There’s no place like home.’

## CHAPTER XL.

### OF THE AUTHOR AND HIS BOOK.

AND now, friend reader, thou hast seen me, at last, through all the places of my imprisonment and back to my home. Have I not led thee a somewhat strange and painful, yet not altogether unpleasing, pilgrimage? whilst the consciousness that thou wast all this time treading the ground of reality, of this earthly world, must have rendered thy sojourn more strange. Even so it is; reality is always romantic, though the romantic is not always real.

Having written of myself and others, it may not appear unseemly if I give a short history of the origin and progress of the present work, and conclude with some general, but I trust not unimportant, observations on the present condition of the country, the fallacious views of parties, and the means to be adopted for our safe transition to an approaching state of society.

I make no excuse about the "partiality of friends" having induced me to take the step of publication. I have not any friends who, in that respect, either could influence me, or would attempt it. They would know it was not necessary to do so; they would have the confidence in me to feel assured that I should produce a book which, whilst it interested the reader, would form a tablet of facts, a group of characters which otherwise would have passed into oblivion; and that it would, so far, be useful to the future historian of the days recorded. In the performance of this task, however, I have sought counsel only of myself. A long train of fruitless exertions, of disappointed hopes, of harassments of body and



mind, of young days and years wasted and flung away for nothing, except to find selfishness, ingratitude, and detraction, where I should have met every generous and manly virtue, could not have weighed on any heart as they did on mine, without producing a will of its own, a purpose beyond the ordinary motives of human nature : therefore impervious to them, and, in some respects, also above them.

I had friends, however, and I am proud to acknowledge them, who, when my purpose became known, lent me every assistance in furtherance of my object ; but their friendship was not of that cast which—though some of them were public men—sought its reward in the public emblazonment of their names ; therefore on that point I am silent. They expected something better from me, and they have had it—the sincere though unpretending gratitude of my heart. Still I may say they are not great men, in the ordinary sense of the word ; nor rich men, in the golden hue of richness ; nor poor men, from a penurious craving spirit ; nor high men on the stilts of gaudy pride ; nor low men, degenerate through ignorance and vice. Some of them are poets, and of imperishable name too ; others are encouragers and admirers of literature, of the genuine uneducated, as well as the educated stamp. Some are men “ well to do in the world ” ; some are humble, but trustworthy servants ; and others in more distinguished situations : but all are of that class which is privileged to—

“ Hear the muses in a ring,  
Aye, round about Jove’s altar sing.”

Such are they who enabled me to bring my memoir before the public. Without their aid I might have written—as indeed I should—for posterity : to the pecuniary benefit, mayhap, of some thankless “ next of kin,” or to the emolument of that very respectable set of tradesmen who are said to “ drink wine out of authors’ skulls.”

But there were others, besides friends, whom I had to encounter, to smile upon, when I was full of sadness, to look up unto when my hopes were drooping ; for in a case like mine,

where a purpose of novel execution had to be prosecuted like a piece of market business, we must try all, likely and unlikely, and spare none, shun none, on account of their looks, or creeds, or of our own suppositions. How many bitter disappointments then fell to the lot of him who travelled the great world, with nothing to exchange for its bread save the unperishing food of the mind—the etherial for the substantial, the spirit for the body ! But why do I expatiate ?

One of that class, about the education of which so much is now being said—a self-taught writer—produces a book which is certainly not to be despised on account of its morals, its politics, or its religion. He waits on some of the richest of those who profess to be friends to the working classes, and to them he respectfully presents his humble production, when, what is the reception he and his book experience ? One “never buys books, he has not time to look at them.” Another has “hundreds of volumes, chestsful he has never read.” One says, “the book won’t suit him” ; another “never reads such things” ; and another superciliously walks away, he “is not in that line, that morning.”

But I will not give way to the language which waits for utterance when I recur to these things. I will turn rather to the consolatory view, and recollect how indifference at the office of one rich man was more than atoned for by a courteous reception at that of another—how rudeness at one place was followed by encouraging attention at the next—how to the bustle and importance of the warehouse succeeded calm and respectful discussion—how ignorant superciliousness was rebuked by thanks for my attention—how, in short, many received me with civility, many with kindness, many heard me with patience, many wished me success, and gave me earnest of their wish, many recommended me to friends, many referred me to others, several led me to their hospitable boards, and some who declined my work laid me under an obligation by the manner in which they did so.

The booksellers were certainly the most amusing class I had dealings with. One wrote to me for the work whilst publishing in parts, and sold it well for me. Another, whose windows

were crowded with old tomes and his counters with the numbers of "Master Humphrey's Clock," "Jack Sheppard," "Nicholas Nickleby," and such like serials (a house of long standing in the trade), looked at the volume—looked at the title—turned the book over, and gave it back, declining to sell it on any account; another objected to a word in the title—it "wouldn't do for his customers"; one wrote to me from London, offering to become my agent, at forty-five per cent. of course; and another London house "begged leave to decline the publishing of it at all."

Amidst such variety of quickly succeeding incidents, some pleasing, others discouraging, some of them ups in the world, others decided downs, but with more of the latter than the former, how could a man struggling to rise comport himself? It would be difficult; but old John Bunyan has a verse which answer the question.

"There's no discouragement,  
Shall make him once repent,  
His first avowed intent,  
To be a pilgrim.

Whoso beset him around  
With dismal stories;  
Do but themselves confound,  
His strength the more is.

Nor lions can him fright,  
He'll with the giants (tyrants) fight,  
And he shall have his right,  
To be a pilgrim."

To the effect which this and other small works of mine have produced I think I may refer with some degree of certainty and satisfaction. The publication of my small poem—or rather versification of Berenger's "*La Lyonnaise*"—with its accompanying notes and postscript, was quickly followed by that most important assemblage of the trading and working classes, the operative Anti-corn-law banquet at Manchester;



a decided step, and one, too, "in the right direction." That was the first time the two classes had come together to shake hands, and look manfully in each other's faces. A few more such meetings, and the occupation of the incendiary demagogue, the real "divider and destroyer," had ceased. Its moral influence was greater than that of a hundred bazaars or conferences.

Since the publication of the present work, the question of the education of the working classes has seemed to have received a fresh impulse, and the agitation on that subject still forms an engrossing topic of discussion. A minister of the Established Church at Manchester has thought the matter of sufficient importance to claim the advocacy of his pen, and he has given it in a most excellent spirit.

A gentleman of Salford, heretofore of Conservative principles, also put forth a tract on the necessity of uniting the middle and working classes; and just latterly, Mr. Sturge, of Birmingham, who, if I mistake not, has had one of my books in hand, has come forth an advocate for "complete suffrage." The ruthless tone of Chartism has been softened, and I know that some of the leaders have had my books. The more rational and honest have become loosened from the violent and unprincipled; and as, ultimately, the latter must wither of their own madness, so the former may be expected to adhere to realities only, dropping the extremes of things, until all the practical good has been obtained, wisely applied, and permanently adopted. If I may not claim to have been the pioneer in some of these and other salutary movements, I may certainly, at any rate, take my place in the advanced guard; and it is some reward to find one's self so honourably stationed.

Still, much remains to be done, and I am ready to do my share, in my own way, and for—THE NATION! That is the only party I will serve; though, if all things were finely balanced, even my country has only a step-mother's claim to my services. I have given more to her than I have received, and far more than many of her most favoured sons had either the heart, or the brains, to contribute. But enough of this, I



am willing still to lend a hand to the old lady, unkind though she has been. Let us, then, inquire how she is situated.\*

Behold the crown without influence, and the sport of faction; the factions themselves strong enough to enact evil, but too weak to effect much good. The aristocracy blindly clutching their rents, whilst their very acres are in jeopardy, as if they could not perceive, and would not be made to comprehend, until too late, that cheap bread for the people means also, all they seem to care about, cheap pride, cheap pomp, cheap distinction for themselves.

Next are the priesthood, scrambling for worldly gain, and squabbling as to which sect or party shall have most hand in moulding the young brains of the rising generation; as if they had something else in view besides making them into good men and women; as if there were a precept, known only to themselves, and superior to that, "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you."

Then there are the land-tillers, blind and blundering serfs to the landowners, though the latter knock them about like the clods of their own fields, and for the same purpose too, to make them yield rent.

Next come the manufacturers, working at the wrong end, and trying to make a pitiable impression on the heads and hearts of a class that never, since the days of Cromwell, was pervious to anything at variance with its own will, save a battle-axe or a bullet. There they are, striving for cheap bread, as if it were present salvation, and forgetting what all history is constantly proclaiming, that nothing human is fixed: that crowns, sceptres, dominions, institutions, establishments, and monopolies are ever changing, ever departing from their old seats, springing up anew in other places, and leaving deserts where they formerly flourished. Tyre, Sidon, Carthage,

\* It must be borne in mind that this was written in 1842, a time when, as Mr. Spencer Walpole observes, the social condition of the nation touched the lowest point in a long and continuous decline. It was just before the Free Trade epoch. Bamford's remarks convey a graphic and painful impression. He considered the state of things desperate. He lived to witness a great change.

Greece, Rome!—all the departed nations of the world warn us of this; and still we remain as if we were unconscious that our time must come, is coming,—nay, is almost at the threshold.

What, then, “shall we do to be saved?” We must look our difficulties in the face like men. The times which have been never will return; we cannot recall that which has departed, and is still going; we cannot, any more than we can still the ocean, prevent our manufactures from being set up in other nations. We have read them too profound a lesson for that. We have exhibited the spectacle of a small community combating the world, and buying or beating it all round. We have shown the secret of our strength, of all our warlike strength—and they will act upon it. We have shown them how our manufactures produced commerce, which produced wealth, which created credit, which supplied taxes and loans illimitable, and enabled us to wield, with tremendous effect, all the resources of our vast navy and our numerous armies; beating those we encountered, and subsidising the remainder until we either had time to beat them ourselves or could get others to beat them.

And will not the nations lay hold of this wonderful power, and try to render it available to their own interests? Most certainly they will. The novelty of the thing itself would be a great temptation; and though no one nation may manufacture to the extent that we have done, they may manufacture for themselves, and they will do so. America, with its cotton-fields and its teeming population, will spin its own yarn and weave its own cloth, whether we will or no; and the nations of the Continent will do, are doing, the same. They have nothing else to do in peace, nor can anything be more natural than that they should do so. We cannot, must not, always be spinners and weavers for the world; and if we could, I do not see that it is desirable we should. Let these truths be impressed on our minds, and let us, like a community of sensible men, calculate all our disadvantages, and prepare for the worst.

Whether or not we shall be prepared depends on the exer-

tions of the wise and good of all classes. If preparations are made we may be a suffering family, but we shall be an united one, and half our evils will be obviated. Those we must endure will be borne in a noble spirit; whilst those we surmount, and they may be many, will be subjects for our common triumph.

Let all the sufferers, then, of whatever class or description, all who love their country, all who would promote the happiness of posterity and of mankind, unite to procure by peaceful means a suffrage co-extensive with direct taxation, an annual accountability of members to their constituents, cheap food for the hungry, cheap clothing for the naked, cheap labour for the industrious (we must cut a straightforward swathe—we cannot turn aside to leave nooks and corners for classes), cheap rents for the cottager, cheap rents for the farmer, cheap education for every one, cheap law in our courts, cheap justice on the bench, and real justice too, cheap religion, and freedom with it, a cheap, money-despising, vanity-shunning priesthood, a cheap, noble-minded, open-handed aristocracy, elder brothers and fathers of the people, and lastly, or firstly if you will, a cheap government, and a cheap but firm Executive.

I would not, like the O'Connorites, insist on having the whole of these things, or nothing; I would take any part, and think well of it, and get the others as soon as I could.

A bond of union like this, entered into and prosecuted without noise, without agitation or frothy declamation (with which the ears of the people are dinned nowadays, and which is but the pumping out of so much energy to the winds), would put down all demagoguism, all trading agitation, all jealousies, all dissensions, all recriminations. It would bring together good men and true of all grades, and would create a brotherhood which, whilst it directed the masses, would also prepare them for whatever vicissitude was at hand. Like the veterans of an army, it would show its comrades how to bear as well as to dare.

But the whole extent of the evil must be steadily scanned: there must not be any half-measures, any exemptions for this or that interest, for this or that portion of the community.



During fifty years the English nation has been engaged in a gluttonous scramble for wealth, and now the time is coming when there must be a disgorging from the highest to the lowest. We shall be never the worse for it, after all, but better, more long-lived, both as individuals and as a nation, provided we get the crisis over pretty smoothly, and that depends upon ourselves. Our weaver lads must put up, as their grandfathers did, with jannocks and barley bread, and barm dumplings, and brown ale; our farmers' "ladies," as the daughters of farmers are commonly called, must don their clogs, and milk their own cows, and make their butter, and darn their own stockings. "The Mrs." may ride behind Robin instead of taking out her gig; whilst the manufacturer's lady must not deem it beneath her to sit basting a good Yorkshire pudding, without a firescreen, instead of perching on a screw stool thrumming a piano. We must all take our share in the humiliation, and be thankful it is no worse. We must work like a willing crew, or the ship will be lost.

Yes, the change must be prepared for in our towns, our villages, our homes, our manufactories, and our seaports, as well as at the seat of government. The evil does not all lie there. Our present condition is the consequence of our folly as a nation, and of the natural course of events. Our grandfathers and fathers were all mad for war with the French, and the most wise and popular government that could have been established would have gone mad too, with a mad people under it. The wars which plunged us into irredeemable debt were the acts of the nation, and the nation must submit to its own infliction.

The very same cause which removed the silk manufacture from Spitalfields into Lancashire, namely, cheapness, is now taking our manufactures into other countries. So that even the repeal of the Bread Tax, desirable as it is, would not save our trade, unaccompanied by such other measures as would cut down all other taxes to the very core, and place our expenditure on a most rigid scale of economy. We must all be prepared to make sacrifices. We must determine to deserve redemption; the nation must act as one man, or at least the



influential portion of it must, and the sooner it is set about the better.

If we honestly lay our shoulders to the wheel, and lift all together with a long pull and a strong pull, and a sober and noiseless one, we shall get over the slough upon firmer land, and into better ways. If not, and we stick fast and begin to sink, how inglorious it will be to be reminded by the gods that we are perishing because we did not perform our whole duty.

Reader, consider these things seriously—and FARE THEE WELL.

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